

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA



CAROLINE M. FULLER



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The Flight of Puss Pandora

“ One may purr and purr, and still be a spit-cat ”



“ ‘I ran straight into his arms.’ ” FRONTISPIECE. See page 242.

The Flight of Puss Pandora

By
Caroline Fuller

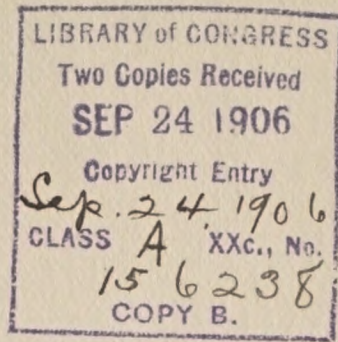
Author of "The Alley Cat's Kitten," "Across the
Campus : A Story for Girls," etc.



*Illustrated from Drawings after Photographs
by the Author*

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TO MY GODSON
FRANKLIN WASHBURN

"The Norlands,"
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The Flight of Puss Pandora

CHAPTER ONE

AMONG THE MASTS

MY first memory is of two round balls of fur sunning themselves on a red tin roof, and watching the clothes which flapped like white sails on a line above our heads.

The large ball of fur was my mother, the little one — myself, and our home was at the top of a very high building, of the kind called “sky-scrapers,” where the janitor lived.

The janitor’s wife loved flowers, and our playground was gay with the red and yellow flame of nasturtiums that danced from box to box along the roof; while the borders of sweet alyssum often trembled from the touch of a whisking tail or forbidden paw, for we loved

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flowers too. Indeed, my mother went so far as to say that she had seen flowers growing in the ground, quite apart from boxes or pots, and that out in the fields there were so many that one could chew them without being cuffed. This was said to comfort me after being punished for coming in with too many sweet alyssum blossoms clinging to my whiskers.

My mother's name was Annie, and she was what is known as a "coon cat." Some people say that there is no such thing as a coon cat, but I am sure that they must be mistaken, because my mother was one; she had a splendid bushy tail like an Angora, with a fur boa around her neck.

She was born in Maine and had come to New York in a ship with the janitor's wife, and always after that she had thought that she was out at sea. The high chimneys around us were the masts of vessels, and the roar of the traffic below was the breaking of waves.

The janitor's wife often said that my mother's mind had never been quite right since the trip,

AMONG THE MASTS

because she would climb to the tops of the highest chimneys, and sit by the hour, looking out over the city, not answering when called —



“SHE WOULD CLIMB TO THE TOPS OF THE HIGHEST
CHIMNEYS”

“Koom down, koom down, *verrücktes Thierchen*.
Ah, you von crazy cat!”

But of course they could not understand that my dear mother was only watching the horizon for any sign of a new mast or sail, and

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as she was part coon it was quite natural that she should enjoy sitting in high places.

I was not handsome like her, although my fur was thick, and I had an unusual amount of style to my tail, but the janitor and his wife consoled me by saying that I would probably grow up to have more sense.

Their son, little Gottfried, often played with us on the roof, until the tin grew too hot for our toes, when we would retire into the shadow of the house, and no amount of coaxing could bring us out again.

But one day Gottfried did not come, and we heard his mother crying. Soon afterwards we learned that he had met with an accident in the street, and was now at a hospital.

"What is a street?" I asked my mother; and she replied, "It is their name for the bottom of the sea. Gottfried will have plenty of fish to eat if he lives there."

And I too wished that I might make a visit to the street, and dine off fish, which I was just learning to enjoy.

AMONG THE MASTS

A week later the janitor returned from the hospital and told us that Gottfried would come home the next day. He was nearly well again, and such a beautiful young lady had been to visit him, and read him stories in his own language.

“Ach, she was angel-like!” he exclaimed. “And I says to her, ‘What in Himmel’s name can I gif you in return for all you does for my poor son?’ She laugh and say she want nothings. And then I feel so bad I almost cry. And then the goot Gott puts it in her head to say, ‘I have everytings I want but one little cat.’ And I says, ‘Thank Gott that He has placed it in my power to gif you what you need!’ So to-night I take little Peter” (for that was what they called me) “and I bring him to her house, as a present from a grateful father’s heart.”

“Ach, that is goot!” said his wife, and after dinner she washed me very carefully, — not as my own mother does, but with a nail brush, — and rubbed me until all my uneven kitten-hairs

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stood on end. Then she tied a green and yellow striped ribbon around my neck, and when evening came they picked all the nasturtiums,—every one,—until only leaves and bare brown earth were left. Then they put me and the flowers in a basket, and shut my mother out on the roof when she tried to follow us. I heard the harsh grating of the elevator door on the floor below, and knew that I was at last to take a journey down to the bottom of that great ocean whose roar had always filled my ears.

As they carried me off I looked back through the glass door of our little house at my mother, expecting that she would still be there, crying for her child. But she seemed to have forgotten already, and I saw her beautiful tail waving slowly in the moonlight, as she stood, with silvered fur and wistful eyes, looking out to sea.

AN ELEVATOR TRIP

CHAPTER TWO

AN ELEVATOR TRIP

THE name of "Little Peter's" new mother was Miss Annabel Van Camp, and she lived with her brother in an apartment house between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West.

Annabel's brother was an instructor at Columbia College, and Annabel was a writer of children's stories, some of which came out in *St. Nicholas*, while others did not so easily find a home.

"My best stories are all refused," she confided to the kitten who was perched upon her knee. "It's only my bad ones that they really want."

"E-u!" said the round-faced baby, gazing at and through Annabel as intently as if she saw make-believe grasshoppers walking up and down her spine.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“ I ’m going to name you Pandora because you ’re so full of curiosity. Pandora was a lady who opened a box and let lots of trouble out into the world. That ’s you, baby. I don’t doubt that she tried to swing on the curtains, too, and dug holes in the mashed potato, — that is, if they had mashed potato in those days.”

“ E-u ! ” replied Pandora, politely, although she thought it scarcely kind of her mistress to mention these little failings.

“ Now, what is it ? ”

For the kitten had scrambled up Annabel’s Scotch four-in-hand tie, leaving twenty little claw marks in the bright silk, and laid one paw softly on the moving lips.

“ No offence intended, ” said Annabel, cheerfully. “ I think Pandora is a much prettier name than Peter. Now I ’m going to write, and you must take a nice little maltese-and-white nap on that green cushion with the piny cover.”

Pandora curled up obediently on the silken pine cones, until the fountain pen began to

AN ELEVATOR TRIP

scratch. Then she climbed up on Annabel's shoulder and added her own scratches to the procession, "shinning" down her mistress's arm as if it was a nice soft tree, and chasing the pen as she would have chased a shiny beetle with alluring thin legs.

"That won't do at all," said Annabel. "There! you've wiped my last sentence out with your tail. You'll have to go into the kitchen."

"Nice dog — huh?" remarked the "green" Swedish cook whom Annabel was training.

"No, *cat* — cat," corrected her mistress. "She must stay here while I work. Don't let her run out into the hall."

"Sure, Van Camp," said Elga, pleasantly, not understanding in the least. She had not yet seen the need of addressing her employers as Miss or Mr., for were they not both Van Camps? and whether they were Miss or Mister concerned themselves alone.

"Run quick up," she said, opening the door when Annabel had gone. "Van Camp wills."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

And Pandora was whisked out of the kitchen like the puff-ball off a dandelion stem.

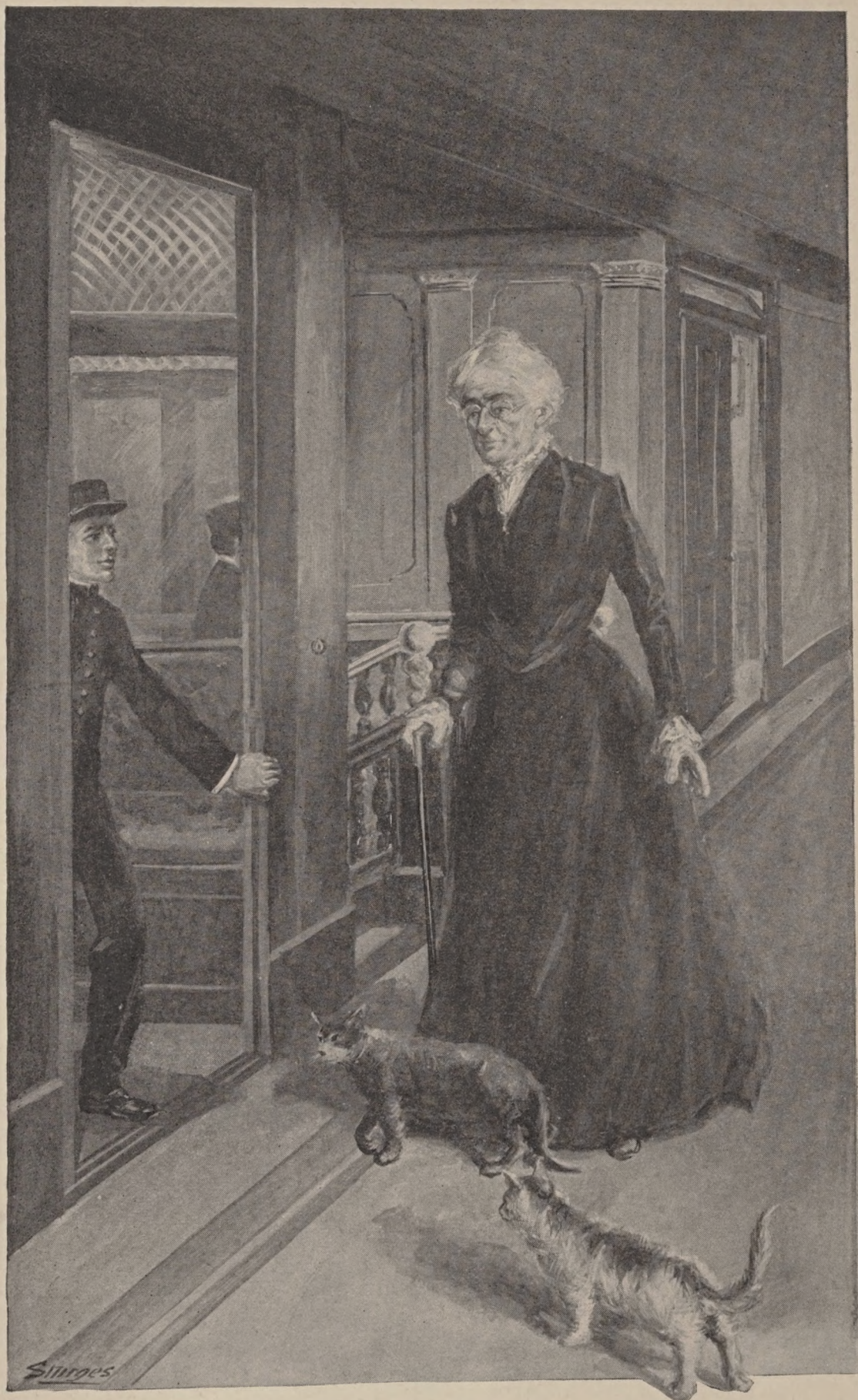
"E-u?" she remarked inquiringly, but nobody answered, so she decided that Elga had been right after all. It was easier to go down stairs than up, so she jumped carefully from step to step until she reached another little square hall, exactly like her own except for different smells in the kitchen. As she was wondering what to do next, the door opened, and out stalked a large cat, rather stiff in the joints, and with a general appearance of great age. He glanced at the stairs, then sat down patiently to wait for the elevator.

"Going up?" he asked, blinking at Pandora with near-sighted eyes.

"Yes, sir," said Pandora, respectfully. "I don't know."

"Better come along," he returned. "Row! Ow!"

And the door of the flat opened again. A quaint old lady stepped out, saying, "Ah, b'ess his heart! did maman forget to ring the bell?"



“ ‘Hello! got another passenger,’ said the elevator boy, grinning.”

AN ELEVATOR TRIP

and she pressed the electric button. There was a slam below, and the elevator came up.

"Take Bachelor to the roof," she said, and the ancient cat walked sedately in, with Pandora scuttling at his heels.

"Hello ! got another passenger," said the elevator boy, grinning. "All aboard for the Cherry Blossom Grove !"

And the elevator went up to the top of the house, or nearly to the top ; for when it stopped Bachelor jumped down from the seat which he had mounted in order to examine his whiskers in the glass, and calling to Pandora, led her up another short flight of stairs.

"Making a long stay ?" he asked, as the kitten scrambled painstakingly along beside him.

"I've taken the third-floor flat and the people who live in it," she replied, "but the length of my stay is uncertain."

"Dear me, indeed !" said Bachelor, thoughtfully. "Well, you'd better meet some of the neighbors while you're up here. It will be no trouble to make you acquainted."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

But as they emerged on the roof he stopped short, and his hairs, all except those on his tail, stood on end.

“What’s the matter?” asked Pandora in alarm, yet wondering why, if he was frightened, his tail had not swelled with the rest of him.

“Boys,” he said briefly. “Gideon, who lives upstairs, and a stranger. They are doing something with that box.”

“Does Gideon scratch?” asked Pandora.

“No, he’s gentle, but his friend looks dangerous. He has too large a stomach for a perfectly safe boy.”

“It’s awful hard lines she won’t let you keep any pets,” the unsafe boy was saying to his friend. “Why, our flat’s lots smaller than yours, and we have a cat and two dogs and a parrot.”

“I know it,” said Gideon, bitterly. “But you’ve got a real mother—the decent sort, and mine’s only a ’dopted aunt. She won’t stand for a bird even, or a tame bug—nothing that a chap can call his own.”

AN ELEVATOR TRIP

“Did you ever try her with a cat? Ain’t you got any mice in your flat?”

“We did have a mouse, but Aunt Pen caught it in one of those catch ’em alive traps with a wheel, and then she would n’t even let me keep the mouse.”

“Well, this is something that can live all right out of doors,” said the fat boy, plunging his arm under his jacket, and what had appeared to be a fat stomach suddenly collapsed, as he drew out a kicking white rabbit.

“There you are!” he said. “This is Hominy. Ain’t he a stunner for twenty-five cents? You never could have got him for that in the world, if I had n’t thrown in that piece of harness that Curls gave me for Polly’s tail feathers.”

“What did Curls want with the tail feathers?” asked Gideon.

“Made a green-tailed pigeon for the show. Axle bet him he could n’t raise a new kind of pigeon before Christmas. But Curls did, —

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tied the feathers on with threads so they did n't show. It was a great success."

"I'll take Hominy downstairs when Aunt Pen goes to Committee meeting," said Gideon. "That's the only chance we'll get."

"Hello! whose cats?" asked the other boy, suddenly observing Bachelor and Pandora.

"Oh, that old fellow belongs to a French lady on the second floor. She walks with a cane. He does n't do that, but he's too stiff to walk upstairs, so he cries until somebody comes and rings the elevator bell for him. We all do it because he's so cute. I have n't seen the kitten before, but I think she belongs to Miss Annabel Van Camp. She told me she was going to have one. Come, puss, puss!"

And Pandora trotted over to meet him with her tail in the air.

"Let her see the rabbit," said Gideon's friend, whose name it appears was Weasels. And as Pandora had never before seen a rabbit, she hurried up to examine Hominy's unquiet nose. But Hominy pointed his ears

AN ELEVATOR TRIP

forward in terror, and when Pandora kissed him, gave a great stamp of rage, and a funny little grunt which meant, "If you embarrass me like that again in public, I'll knock you over with my best hind leg, and kick you in the stomach."

Pandora understood, and rounded up her tiny back with a spit, which meant: "If you scorn my attentions like that I'll claw red lines on those pink ears of yours, and do unspeakable things to your eyes."

"Put Hominy in his box," said Gideon, anxiously, "we don't want a fight."

So Hominy was thrust into his box, which had a smaller one inside for a bed, while the top served as a kind of balcony or smoking



HOMINY

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

room, just as Hominy preferred to use it. The two boys went off downstairs, and Pandora saw that Bachelor was looking anxious, and trying to see if his whiskers were on straight. Glancing in the direction of his interest she saw another cat picking her way daintily across an adjoining roof.

“Do I look all right?” he asked in an excited whisper.

“You look just about the same as you did a minute ago,” said Pandora, impatiently, wondering how any cat could think so much about himself.

“That’s Miss Harry,” he explained in a hurried aside. “She belongs to a Southern family next door.” And he jerked importantly across the roof to meet her, while Miss Harry sat down and appeared to be looking the other way.

They had a short conversation, and then Bachelor came back with a most gratified expression.

“She is willing to meet you,” he said.

AN ELEVATOR TRIP

"I did n't care to speak at first," said Miss Harry, as Pandora approached, "because I feared that you might not be well-born. I'm from Charleston."

"Where's that?" asked Pandora, saucily; but Miss Harry ignored the question.

"When I found that you belonged to the Van Camps I was willing to know you, because I've heard my mistress say that the Van Camps are of gentle blood."

"Oh, indeed!" said Pandora, indignantly. "But if you want to know what I think, I consider you an outrageous, ridiculous little snob, and I don't care whether you know me or not!"

And with that she bristled her foolish young tail and walked away.

"Well! did you ever!" exclaimed Miss Harry, breathlessly. And Bachelor added in a hoarse growl, "Most unfeeling."

"Kitty, kitty! Oh, Elga, where's Pandora?" called Annabel's distressed voice from the floor below.

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“E-u!” said Pandora, scrambling down the short flight of steps. But she did not attempt to go any further. No indeed! for had not Bachelor taught her what to do? The elevator was there, and walking into it she jumped up on the plush-covered seat and said, “E-u!”

“Well, by George!” exclaimed the elevator boy, in amazement, “if I have n’t got another boss.”

He took the elevator to the third floor and called out, “Miss Van Camp, here’s your cat!”

Annabel embraced Pandora in relief, saying, “Oh, you bad thing! Where have you been? Elga, why did you let her run into the hall?”

“Yes,” said Elga, with a vacant smile. “Van Camp’s dog.”

And Pandora had to let it go at that.

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

CHAPTER THREE

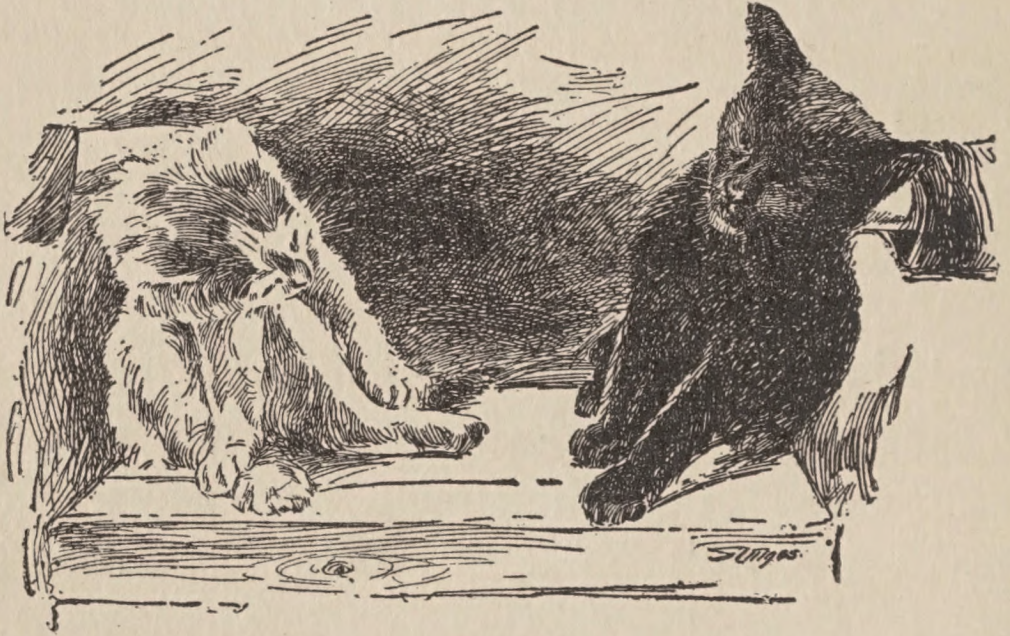
THE PURR-PUSS AND THE SPIT-CAT

THE Purr-Puss and the Spit-Cat were not real kittens, as one might suppose, but two characters in the story that Annabel was writing. Annabel said that she took the idea from Shakespeare: "One may purr and purr and still be a spit-cat." And as she illustrated these stories of hers with photographs, it was one of Pandora's privileges to pose for them.

"Posing," Pandora found, meant to wake up when one was sleepy, and be made to chase one's tail, or else to stop chasing it, just when it seemed most festive, and strike an angelic attitude on the table beside a vase of white lilies. This morning Annabel curled the kitten around her neck like a fur boa, and danced with her into the parlor, where Gideon was screwing the camera to the tripod.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Hello, Pandora,” he called, and Pandora tried to put up her tail in welcome, but owing to her position it went down instead.



THE PURR-PUSS AND THE SPIT-CAT

“This thing’s got a game knee,” he complained.

“I know it,” said Annabel. “A dog rushed out and took it by the leg, one day, as if it were a tramp.”

“Where do we go first?” asked Gideon.

“Up Columbus Avenue. There’s a cat in every store.” And much to Pandora’s surprise

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

she was thrust into a silk work-bag, with her head out at the top, and taken for a trolley ride.

"Here's a good place," said Gideon, as the car stopped; and they went into a butcher's shop, where the man behind the counter greeted them with a smile.

"Peddlin' cats?" he inquired. "We don't have much call for them in our line."

"Certainly not," said Annabel. "I'm making photographs for a story, and want to borrow a black kitten. We thought you might have one."

"Sure!" he said eagerly; and, going to the back room, called, "Emma, come, Emma!"

An enormous striped cat, nearly as big as a dog, bounded into the store, and leaped upon the meat-block.

"You can't do better than that, now, can you?" observed the butcher with pride.

"He's very handsome," said Annabel. "But you see the one in my story is a little black kitten, not a big gray cat, so we'll have to look somewhere else."

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“You won’t find a better subject on this street. Why, this cat cured me of rheumatism, and I would n’t take a thousand dollars for him.”

“He’s beautiful,” said Annabel. “Perhaps I’ll come back and take him some other day.”

“Can’t you change the story?” asked the butcher, confidentially, leaning over the counter. “Could n’t your black kitten go walkin’ down the street some day and make the acquaintance of a friend named Emma?”

“I’ll see,” laughed Annabel, as they left the store.

A crowd of interested children began to follow them, and Gideon asked, “Say, kids, do you know any one who’s got a black kitten?”

“My mama-cat has,” said a shy little girl, with one finger in her mouth.

“Well, take us to your mama-cat, then,” said Gideon.

So they followed the little girl, who led them through a dingy hall that smelled of cooking,

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

and up four flights of stairs into a kitchen, where her mother was washing the floor.

“What do you mean by this, Sally?” the woman called angrily. “Take them folks right out in the hall. I won’t have no agents in here!”

“Oh, I beg your pardon,” said Annabel, “but we did n’t mean to intrude upon you, and we’re not agents.”

When she had explained the object of her search the woman smiled grimly, and threw open the door under her sink, where, curled upon a heap of dishcloths, lay a thin gray cat with a little new-born black kitten.

“I’m so sorry,” Annabel said, “but I’m afraid this won’t do. We were after a kitten old enough to purr.”

“Well, you’d orter informed my cat in time, then,” said the woman, crossly. “She done the best she could.”

Annabel apologized and slipped meekly downstairs. They walked up the street in silence until Gideon gave a whoop, and nearly

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

dropped his camera, for on the opposite corner, in a druggist's window, sat a sedate black kitten washing its paws.

"I hate to go in there and ask," said Annabel. "The clerks all look so busy."

"Let's go in and price something they're not likely to keep," said Gideon, hopefully, "like a guinea-pig or a wash-boiler."

"No, but we can have an ice-cream soda," said Annabel.

So they placed Pandora on a show-case full of tooth-brushes and hot-water bags and feeding cups, while a severe-looking clerk served them.

"Is that your kitten?" asked Annabel, timidly, taking out her purse.

"Pay at the desk, please," said the clerk, turning away to attend to a customer at the prescription counter.

"The mean duffer!" exclaimed Gideon, in disgust. "I'll ask the old fellow who's putting up prescriptions."

"Say, Mr. — Mr. Pharmacy," he inquired, "can we photograph your cat?"

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

"A mustard plaster?" asked the old man, obligingly. "Here it is, my little man; ten cents, please."

"I said cat," shouted Gideon, refusing the offered package.

"Hey?" inquired his friend.

"He's deaf," called another clerk, who was weighing borax. "We always write his orders."

"Oh," said Gideon, "I was just beginning to think he might be." So he took a piece of wrapping-paper, and traced laboriously, "May we photograph your cat?"

The old man regarded it through his spectacles, then shouted so suddenly that Gideon jumped, "He's dead."

Gideon was too startled to say anything more, and returned to Annabel with the information that the old man was crazy.

"May we photograph that black kitten?" asked Annabel, patiently, of the clerk who had turned away.

"Certainly," he said, putting a label on a jar of blue crystals.

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“ Oh, thank you so much, but it's too dark to get a picture in here. May we take the kitten out into the little yard behind? ”

“ We have no little yard behind.”

“ Then may I take it into the next yard, behind the candy store—if I'm very careful to bring it back? ”

“ I'm sure I don't know,” said the clerk. “ Excuse me a moment; ” and this time he vanished for good.

Annabel was in despair, but made one more effort when she paid for her soda. “ Do you think I'd be allowed to photograph that cat? ” she asked of the cashier.

“ What cat? ” asked the girl, leaning forward to look. “ That? Why, that is n't our cat. I never set eyes on it before.”

“ Then I can borrow it,” said Annabel, triumphantly, and without waiting further, she tucked the kitten under her arm. But of course Pandora spit at it—who would n't? And it had to be transferred to Gideon, while Annabel took the camera.

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

"Please may we photograph our kittens in your back yard?" she asked of the woman in the candy store.

The woman came out from behind the counter and stared at them suspiciously, then snatched the black kitten angrily from Gideon's arms, saying, "Where'd you steal this cat?"

"Did n't steal it," said Gideon, indignantly. "It was in the drug store, and they did n't know whose it was."

"She's been gone since yesterday," said the woman, still unconvinced.

"We found her next door," explained Anabel; "and I'm glad if she's yours, because we were afraid she had no home. Would n't you like us to make a nice picture of your kitty?"

"How much'd you charge?" asked the woman, scowling.

"Oh, nothing at all. It's for a children's story, and I'll gladly give you one of the photographs to keep."

"Well, go ahead, then," said the woman, "I'll not hinder you."

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“ But can’t we take it out into the back yard, where it’s light? ”

“ Not to-day, you can’t. I’m washing.”

“ Well, perhaps we’d better look for another cat,” said Annabel, wearily. “ There must be more than one black cat on earth.” And again they turned away, disappointed, for the hard-hearted candy-woman did not even attempt to call them back.

“ Do you know of any one who has a black kitten old enough to purr? ” asked Gideon of nearly every one they met as they journeyed wearily onward.

“ Well, not a black one, exactly,” said a timid little woman in a dressmakers’ supply shop, “ but we’ve got an old white one that’s awful smart. He’s got sore eyes and ain’t expected to live. Won’t you take him for us, Miss? ”

It was hard to refuse this request, but, as Gideon said, “ That cat would n’t want you to take him looking like that. It ain’t fair to the cat.”

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

In the very next block they found a mother-cat sitting outside a cobbler's, with two half-grown kittens frisking around her ; and one of these kittens was black !

“ May I, please — ” began Annabel again, and this time she found that they had come to the right place, for the cobbler and his wife beamed upon them in delight.

“ Haf all you please. Haf me and my wife,” he said with a bow ; “ and my shop.”

“ How kind you are ! ” said the exhausted artist. “ But we don't want the whole shop — only the top of your sewing-machine to pose the cats on.”

The cobbler lifted the cover off the machine and took it out into the little court, where there was a great square of sunshine. Annabel knelt down patiently and focussed the machine-top, which was covered with a white cloth to make it look like a table, then said, “ Take Pandora out of the bag.”

Pandora was placed in front of the camera, and jumped down immediately.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Put her back,” said Annabel. Gideon did so.

“Now bring the other cat. Does the black kitten purr?” she asked the cobbler’s wife.

“Ah, he purr! He purr all day so sweet as one hand-organ,” exclaimed the woman, clasping her hands.

But when the Purr-Puss saw Pandora he burst into a perfect cataract of spits, and pushed her off the table. Pandora hastened to conceal herself in a garbage-can, with her face buried in a necklace of potato peelings.

“And I leave it to you to decide,” she said that night to a friend on the roof, “whether anybody else would n’t have done the same!”

“Ah, you bad-bad!” said the woman, cuffing the Purr-Puss, who became so frightened that he would not stay on the table at all.

“Oh, don’t punish him, please!” entreated Annabel. “He was afraid of my kitten because she is strange, but he’ll get used to her. Do let me quiet him — there!”

And under her soothing pats the black kitten

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

soon adopted the rôle that was expected of him, and began to purr. But by this time the spot of sunshine had moved, and the camera had to be focussed all over again.

"Now put them both on the table," said Annabel. "This is the place in the story where the Purr-Puss meets the Spit-Cat, and the Spit-Cat is rude." But when Pandora was returned to the table, it was the brunette Purr-Puss who made all the cutting remarks.

"Why won't Pandora spit?" said Annabel, in disgust. "She spits all the time at home, and that's why I made the Spit-Cat in the story look like her."

"Can't you change 'em 'round?" suggested Gideon. "Or can't you have 'em both spit-cats? That would be nice."

"No, sir! I can see by the gleam in your eye that you'd like a fight. But don't let go of that black kitten's tail."

"Give it some meat," called a hollow voice from what seemed like the sky. And looking up Annabel saw heads peering out of every

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

window in every apartment house that looked down on the court. They had evidently been watching her for some time, too absorbed in the strange performance to utter a sound.

"That is what!" said the cobbler's wife, joyfully. "Meat!" and she pattered across the street to buy a cent's worth of liver, at sight of which the black kitten began to purr again.

"Of course the purr won't show in the picture," Gideon explained, "but the happy expression will."

"Now to make Pandora spit," said Annabel. But Pandora smelled the liver, and wanted some for herself, so she put up her tail and purred.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" said Annabel, sitting down, utterly discouraged, on the garbage-can.

"Me-ow," called a voice overhead. "Me-ow. Take my picture! Smile up pretty! Fzt-fzt!" The black kitten seized the liver and shot into the house.

"Would you mind not talking to the cats?"

PURR-PUSS AND SPIT-CAT

asked Annabel, sweetly, of the gallery gods. "It frightens them, and we are all so tired."

"Say, watcher want 'em to do?" asked a boy on the nearest fire-escape, as the cobbler's wife returned, bearing the still-chewing Purr-Puss.

"I want the Maltese one to spit," said Annabel. "The other one's all right now because his mouth is full."

"I'll fix it," said the boy. "You get ready." And Annabel posed both cats again, with their tails pulled around nicely in front so that they showed.

"Now!" she called, with the bulb in her hand.

"Hi, there, hi! Stst — Malty cat!" called the boy, and looking up, Pandora saw a yellow dog standing on the fire-escape, wagging his tail in the most terrifying manner.

"Ha-ftz! Sp-ha! Ssss —!" she shrieked.

The shutter snapped, the picture was taken, and Pandora, as Gideon expressed it, had "spit herself way across the yard."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

Annabel thanked the boy, and put Pandora back in her bag, promising to send the cobbler and his wife one of the photographs that very week, provided it proved a success. But when the picture was developed there was not a trace of anything — not a cat, nor even a spit on the plate — for Annabel had forgotten to draw out the slide !

TWO ADVENTURES

CHAPTER FOUR

TWO ADVENTURES

ANNABEL'S brother liked Pandora almost as well as Annabel did, and built houses for her out of the "Times Saturday Book Review."

"Give me 'Buster Brown' now," he would say. "I'll make a bowknot for her tail."

"You're a perfect baby," his sister would tell him, when their sides ached from laughing at the kitten's antics.

"Well, I play with her sensibly, anyhow, like a private Zoo, and don't get involved by calling her a 'Diddi Poot-Poot.'"

Annabel blushed, and afterwards whispered to Pandora that she *was* a "Diddi Poot-Poot," but that she must on no account let anybody know.

One Pandora game was to see which of her owners could keep her the longest. Annabel

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

would entice her across the floor with a faint mouse-scratching on a chair, but just as her eyes were blackening for the final spring, Brother would rattle a paper, and the mouse



“PARTICULARLY PLEASANT TO CHEW”

affair would be entirely off. Or when Brother had engaged her attention with a dangling shoe-lace, Annabel would bring out the toy rat, and the shoe-lace was instantly forgotten.

This rat had started out in life as a canton-flannel rabbit, but thinking that Pandora would

TWO ADVENTURES

be more captured by a rat, Annabel had cut off his ears, tucked in his stomach, and sewed on a long chenille tail. This was particularly pleasant to chew, as well as the boot-button eyes, which gleamed alluringly.

But Pandora was so spoiled by all this attention that if they stopped playing with her for a second she would curl in her front paws and go foolishly to sleep. Or perhaps she only pretended to be asleep. At any rate, this habit of hers was the cause of much astonishment to Brother.

"Now, just suppose that I was playing tag," he said, "and for a few seconds nobody chased me. I'd lie down on the ground and say, 'Precisely the time for a nap.' Perhaps I might be allowed to sleep as much as half a second before somebody fell over my legs or sat down on my head. But I'd have had my nap, and would feel refreshed for the whole day."

"What nonsense!" Annabel laughed. "Pandora is bored by us and wants to play with cats her own age."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

So Pandora would be sent upstairs in the elevator to frolic with Robby, a rowdy little kitten who turned up on the roof from no one knew where, and went back afterwards to the same place. Miss Harry despised Robby for his lack of breeding, and Robby made faces at her in return, calling her "proudy," and other things of the same kind. But Robby and Pandora had fine times together, racing from one roof to another, until one day they crashed through a skylight straight onto the bed of a queer old man. They had seen this old man before, peering down at him through the glass, and admiring his two bare feet which stuck out from under the bedclothes, and almost never moved.

"Don't blow 'em out!" he would call, when any one opened the door. "Look out for the draught!" And his daughter would beg him to cover his feet up; but he would become very angry and ask, "Do you want to put them out entirely? Then who will light them again?"

This puzzled the cats, until they heard the

TWO ADVENTURES

girl explain to a visitor that the old man had been a lamplighter, and received a severe fall one night while replacing a broken globe. Since then he had thought that his feet were lamps, and that every gust of air was going to blow them out.

When the kittens plunged through the skylight the room was filled with broken glass, but when his daughter rushed in she found him sitting on the side of his bed, laughing, with a kitten in each hand, while the two white lamps rested forgotten on the floor.

"I feel lots better to-day, Maggie," he said. "I guess I'll have to go down street a few blocks and fix that broken lamp. This falling glass reminded me of it."

And although he had been in bed for two months, he dressed himself easily, and was able to go about his work.

"That's not an uncommon case," the doctor told Maggie. "Another shock, something like the first one, will often cure a person of a queer fancy. A man's mind is a funny thing. But

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what did you do with those cats? Got 'em yet?"

"No, we did n't know who they belonged to, so I tied a basket to a broom-handle and dumped them out on the roof again. It seemed to satisfy them, for they went capering off in high spirits."

"Proud of the good their wickedness had done," laughed the doctor. "Well, I'll remember that prescription. If a person thinks he's sick, throw two cats at him through a skylight, and see if he won't forget his troubles for a time at least."

Bachelor and Miss Harry were quite pale with excitement when the two bad kittens returned, Pandora limping slightly from a cut on her paw.

"Oh, you poor li'l thing!" exclaimed Miss Harry, quite forgetting that she and Pandora were not on speaking terms. And she licked the paw until it felt well again, for under all her airs Miss Harry carried a tender Southern heart.

TWO ADVENTURES

“It puzzled me extremely,” said Bachelor, “to see you vanish so suddenly, and after a few moments reappear. The effect was quite surprising.”

“It is a wonder that we ever got back at all,” said Pandora, flirting her tail. “How would you have felt if you had never seen us again?”

“Most depressed,” said Bachelor, solemnly. “Most depressed.”

After this Miss Harry treated Pandora with more respect, and told her all the gossip of roof and fence. She said that Bachelor’s whiskers were considered the finest in the neighborhood, but — and here her voice dropped — his tail was false!

“False!” exclaimed Pandora in horror. “Why, he switches it as well as I do mine.”

“Yes, but have n’t you noticed that he can’t bend it at all at the small end? He lost his tail in such a sad accident two years ago, and Mademoiselle had this one made for him. It matches the sample that was left so well that

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you'd never guess the truth if you didn't know."

"I wondered that it didn't swell when he was frightened," said Pandora, "but I thought it was because he had so much self-control."

Just then there was a step on the roof, and Gideon came up to feed his rabbit. Hominy's bill of fare was making large holes in Gideon's pocket money, for five cents a week does not go far in cabbages, and Gideon had not yet learned that bunnies can eat the same things that the family does, and enjoy them.

"Here's some oats and celery tops, old fellow," he said; and Hominy ate them up so quickly that one could scarcely believe they had been there; then backed off looking sulky, for he still felt hollow.

"Come on below, skipper," said Gideon, seizing his pink ears. "Your aunt's gone to Committee meeting."

Hominy grunted unwillingly, and planted a brown hind foot on Gideon's mouth, his nose wriggling in fierce jerks.

TWO ADVENTURES

"Now run and stretch your temper," said Gideon, putting him down in the parlor; and Hominy made straight for the fireplace, wiping up considerable soot on his white legs. Then he hopped up on a pale-blue sofa cushion, with the picture of a lady on it, and wiped the soot off on her nose.

"Hold on! This won't do at all. You must come into the kitchen," said Gideon. And they were having a fine romp among the pots and pans, when suddenly the rabbit disappeared.

"Oh, you rascal! where have you gone?" Gideon exclaimed, diving under the sink and behind the stove. But Hominy was nowhere to be found, and in the midst of the search Aunt Pen returned.

"Why are n't you studying?" she asked severely. "I never saw such a boy for wasting his opportunities!"

"I — have n't been wasting 'em," said Gideon, thinking of his frolic with Hominy, and fearful lest a white form should come hopping through the door.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Well, go study your grammar now, while I get supper.” And Gideon went to his room, wondering what would happen when Hominy turned up. But Hominy did not turn up, and supper was eaten without excitement.

“Now I can hunt a little while she’s knitting in the parlor,” Gideon thought; but when Aunt Pen heard him in the kitchen she called, “Gideon, come out of there this minute, you’re after the doughnuts!” and kept a sharp eye on him during the rest of the evening.

But soon after Gideon was in bed he heard a cry of angry surprise, and his aunt came into the room.

“Gideon,” she said grimly, “when I went out to put the milk in the ice-box the door was open, and there was a white rabbit settin’ up outside, eatin’ macaroni by the yard out of that dish left from dinner. Gideon, this is your doing, and after all I’ve sacrificed for you!”

“Oh, perhaps it’s a mistake,” pleaded Gideon. “Perhaps you’ve had another nightmare.”

TWO ADVENTURES

For one evening Aunt Pen had sprung terrified from her bed, calling out that a rooster was riding a camel around her bureau. And it turned out that it was only the result of griddle-cakes and maple syrup that she had eaten for supper. But Gideon could not understand why she had been so alarmed, and wished that he might have nice circus dreams like that, instead of stupid ones about being late for school, and going out to walk without his clothes on.

"I guess you must have dreamed that rabbit," he said, following her into the kitchen. "Why yes, Aunt Pen, you see there is n't any rabbit here."

And there was n't; for Hominy had once more disappeared, and they searched for him half an hour in vain.

"Well, Gideon," said his aunt, looking mortified, "I ask your pardon for having broken you of your rest like this. It must have been the doughnuts that I ate for supper. You can have all the rest of 'em to take to school to-morrow."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

She went meekly to bed, and early the next morning Gideon found Hominy inside an old wash-boiler behind the stove. He was hustled back to his box and did not leave it again immediately, for when Aunt Pen started to warm up the macaroni for dinner, she said :

“Gideon, it is n’t in human nature that I could have dreamed away three quarters of a dishful. I guess you’d better go to bed, sir, and spend the afternoon.”

THE BATTLES OF BACHELOR

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BATTLES OF BACHELOR

ONE night Pandora was awakened by hearing Bachelor howling insults from the fire-escape, and two street-cats answering him in language quite unfit to repeat.

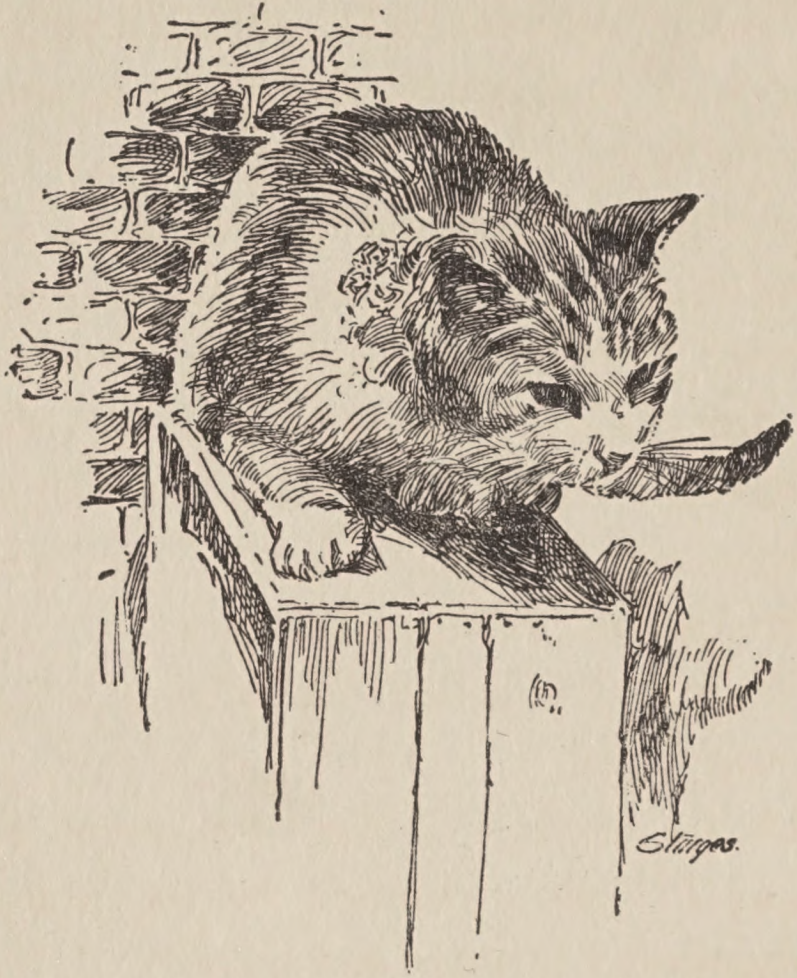
“Oh, you’re a mamma’s boy!” moaned the drab-white cat with the tattered ears.

“You’re a cowardly swell,” wailed the bleached Maltese. “Come down and fight it out in the ash-barrel. Come down. Come d-o-w-n!”

Pandora ran out on her own fire-escape to hear the rest of their conversation, and narrowly escaped being knocked off by a shoe flung from an upper window.

“Not I,” groaned Bachelor, in a choking voice. “You have neither the manners nor the speech of a gentleman.”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA



““OLD BUMBLE-BEE!” CALLED BACHELOR”

Splash ! came some water from the first-floor apartment, but it did not hit either the drab-white cat or the bleached Maltese. It went, instead, into the shoe thrown by Gideon's aunt.

“Fr-aid cat !” jeered the drab-white robber at Bachelor.

THE BATTLES OF BACHELOR

“Old — bumble bee !” called Bachelor, who, being well bred, could not think of anything worse to say.

But the ash-barrel cat seemed to understand all the thoughts that the other failed to express, and with a mighty howl he took a reckless leap from a clothes-post to Bachelor’s side. There was a fearful scrimmage, a cloud of flying hair, and Bachelor’s false tail fell through the fire escape to the court below.

“Whipped !” called the bleached Maltese from the fence.

“Help ! thieves !” cried the poor French lady, as Bachelor, pursued by the drab-white cat, thundered through her halls.

“Oh, mother ! come to your boy !” called the cowardly Bachelor, as the drab-white treed him on the mantelpiece.

“Mamma’s coming !” answered Mademoiselle, stumbling around after her cane ; but she tripped over something and fell back among the bedclothes, becoming so tangled up in them that she could not move.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Oh, mother,” wailed Bachelor again, who had retreated to the top of the clock, a small, slippery affair with a silly face. “One — two — three — four — five — six,” struck the clock, and the robber cat shook in his fur, for he had never heard such a sound before.

“What did you say?” he faltered, thinking that some new and terrible cat had broken into the room.

“Seven — eight — nine — ten — eleven — twelve,” replied the clock decidedly.

“Oh, by all means,” said the drab-white cat, meekly. “Sorry to have disturbed you, sir.” And he went out again as fast as he had come.

Meanwhile Janie, the maid, had been roused by Mademoiselle’s cries, and, having unbraided her from the bedclothes, they went in to comfort Bachelor, who was still balanced upon the clock.

“You’ve no idea how hard it is to balance one’s self without a tail,” he told Pandora in the morning. “Take care never to mislay yours. If you do you will regret it.”

THE BATTLES OF BACHELOR

“ But how did you get it back ? ” Pandora asked.

“ Oh, mamma made Janie go down the fire-escape and pick it up. She was just in time, for one of my enemies was about to carry it off.”

Just then Gideon went upstairs carrying his aunt's shoe, which he held very carefully so as not to spill the water that was in it. But she did not thank him for his pains ; she said, “ You ought to have had sense enough to pour that water out.”

“ Why, Aunt Pen, I thought this was a proof of how well the shoe was made, and that you 'd be glad to know how much water it would hold.”

“ I wish somebody 'd shoot that old cat of Mademoiselle's,” said Gideon's aunt, and Bachelor immediately retired into his own apartment, leaving Pandora to look in vain for his smile. But a minute later there was a shriek from Janie, followed by cries of “ Bring the cat, quick, ma'am ! There 's a rat in the kitchen ! ”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Janie, you know that Bachelor is completely unnerved after last night. You must go borrow a cat from some one else. Get Miss Van Camp’s. Gideon says she has one.” And Janie flew upstairs to ask for Pandora, who was obligingly handed out to her by Elga, Annabel not being at home to interfere.

“Oh, that kitten’s too small; just hear it cry!” laughed Janie, and carried Pandora downstairs as a joke. But unfortunately Mademoiselle did not view her in that light.

“She’s *petite* — small — but sharp,” she said. “We will set her at our monster.” And to Janie’s horror she put the kitten under the sink, where the rat had gone, and shut the door.

Pandora had never caught even so much as a mouse, but not wishing to seem cowardly, she swelled out her little tail, and walked boldly over to a corner where two beads of fire gleamed at her from the darkness. She afterwards learned that this is not the proper way at all. One should sit quietly beside a hole until

THE BATTLES OF BACHELOR

somebody comes out, then pounce. But of course she was too young to know. The balls of fire did not move, so she spit first at one and then at the other, not realizing that these fiery eyes both belonged to the same rat, and that one spit would have done for the two.

But the second spit brought the rat out of his corner, and suddenly Pandora found herself upsidedown in the stove polish with a smarting nose, for the rat had jumped over her, giving a nip as he passed.

"Ow!" she cried in grief, and Janie opened the sink door indignantly, snatching the kitten up and exclaiming, "What will Miss Van Camp say!"

She wiped the stove polish tenderly from Pandora's whiskers, and put a bit of sticking-plaster on her nose.

"You're a spunky little creature, just the same, and would have killed that rat if you'd been a month older."

"I am in despair!" wailed Mademoiselle, clasping her hands. "The monster still lives."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“ I ’ll call the boys,” said Janie, as Gideon and Weasels came clattering downstairs ; and they followed her to the kitchen in delight, for both Weasels’ dogs had accompanied their master, and were whining in the hall outside.

“ Those are the fellows for a job like this,” said Weasels. “ Come, Blarney, come, Conrad !” and an Irish terrier capered into the room, followed by a dachshund, whose tail naturally arrived some time after his nose.

“ Sic ’im ! Sic ’im !” cried Weasels, pointing to the sink, but the dogs thought that he was referring to Pandora, and, not seeing anything else to “ sic,” made a dash at her.

Pandora scrambled hastily up Mademoiselle’s back to her head, hanging on desperately, while Mademoiselle clutched at the tail of this strange new wig and screamed. The dogs planted themselves at her feet as if she had been a tree, and waited for Pandora to come down.

“ Stand still, ma’am. I ’ll take her off,” said Janie, going to the rescue, while Gideon strangled his laughter with remarks of, “ Oh,

THE BATTLES OF BACHELOR

Jiminy!" "Oh, turnips!" But Weasels was mortified.

"Ei-yi!" cried Blarney, springing up with his yellow bangs falling into his eyes, for he had been soundly cuffed.

"How-ow!" echoed Conrad for the same reason.

"Well then, why don't you go and hunt that rat? Do you think I'm a fool one-horse old cat chaser?"

This was said with such scorn that both dogs immediately shot under the sink, and Conrad became stuck between a pipe and the wall, yelping mournfully.

"Come out of there!" shouted Weasels, seizing him by the hind legs; but this did no good, and Gideon said, "Oh, even if you do start that end, it will be night before you reach the other." For he always jeered at Conrad's sofa-shaped figure.

"Blarney's getting him. Hi on, Blarney!" cried Weasels, as there was a great rattle of pans. But on hearing his name Blarney came

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

out again with many wags, and seemed to consider the matter settled.

"I'll go under myself," said Weasels, in disgust; and presently there came a snort of rage as he called out, "There's a broken place in the floor. He's got under that."

"Oh, where? Let me see too!"

"You can't see anything but his eyes. Oh, get off a fellow's legs, can't you?" And Weasels came out with stove polish beautifully distributed over his nose and chin.

"We'll have to drown him out," said Gideon. "May I have this tea-kettle, Janie?"

A large amount of water was poured into the hole. But nobody came out from under the sink except Conrad, who, having had his toes scalded, made a great effort, and freed himself from the pipe with a terrible yelp.

"What does this mean?" called an angry voice in the hall, and they heard one of the first-floor tenants scolding the janitor in loud tones. "I give notice from to-day," she said. "A pipe has burst in the second-floor

THE BATTLES OF BACHELOR

flat, and the water is coming down into our kitchen."

"Oh, *ciel*!" exclaimed Mademoiselle, rushing to the door. "Madame, that was one little mistake. It was no pipe. It was a rat."

"A rat? What nonsense!" said the woman. "How could a rat be coming down through the ceiling?"

But at this moment the rat did escape from his hole under the sink, and made a dash through the flat, straight for the two women. They parted in terror, and the rat hurried downstairs without waiting for the elevator, disappearing through the open door of the first-floor apartment.

"Angels have mercy!" cried the woman who had made the complaint. "What am I to do?" and she started down after her unwelcome guest, but Weasels' dogs, who were following close behind, ran into her and left her unexpectedly sitting on the steps.

The rat concealed himself in her kitchen, and, in the excitement of trying to get him out, she

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

quite forgot about the water dripping from her ceiling, and that she was going to give notice.

“ Who hurt your blessed little nose ? ” asked Gideon, as he took Pandora home. But the kitten could not explain, and Annabel never found out how that decoration of court-plaster had come into the family.

There was a howl from below, and the rat jumped from the fire-escape to the court, leaving Conrad and Blarney yelping in vain pursuit.

“ He won’t come back here again, though,” said Gideon, triumphantly. “ There’s too much doing in this flat.”

“ Do you know why that rat never came back ? ” asked Bachelor of Pandora, a few weeks later. “ It’s because he was frightened at the sight of *me*.”

IN A COAT-POCKET

CHAPTER SIX

IN A COAT-POCKET

“**W**ELL, if you think I'm such a conceited fool as that, I suppose you won't be sorry to have me go,” said young West, standing near the door.

“Not if you are silly enough to take offence at something I never meant,” said Annabel, indignantly.

“Don't you think I am conceited?”

“I never said so.”

The young man turned away, and putting on his hat and coat left the apartment without another word.

“Oh, very well,” said Annabel to herself, pretending that she did not care.

“H'mph ; serves her right !” grumbled the young man, striding down Central Park West.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

But suddenly he stopped short and exclaimed,
“ By Jove ! what ’s this in my pocket ? ”



IN A COAT-POCKET

“ E-u,” answered Pandora, rubbing her nose against his fingers.

“ Crawled in and went to sleep while we were scrapping, by all that ’s inconvenient ! ” he

IN A COAT-POCKET

thought. "But I won't return her now. No! Annabel shall write first and apologize for not saying that I was *not* conceited. Pandora has planned a noble revenge."

She had indeed, but West did not realize yet on whom it would prove to be.

"Oh, Mr. West!" called a girl's voice from a hansom which had drawn up at the curb. "Won't you come home to dinner with me to-night? The card party for Thursday is off, and I have lots to say to you."

"I shall be delighted, Miss Dillam," he began; then, remembering Pandora, added, "if I may take a few minutes to run home and dress."

"Oh, not for the world," she said. "You are all right as you are. It's quite informal, you know,—nobody honored with an invitation but yourself. Do jump in."

So West reluctantly complied, arranging his coat very carefully, in order that Pandora might not be sat upon.

But the gaiety died out of the girl's voice as

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

she turned to him, saying, "Did you know that Grandma is very much worse? It's on her account that the party was given up."

"Indeed? I am sincerely sorry to hear it. Oh, thunder!"

The girl looked at him in pained surprise, but he did not feel like explaining at such a moment that he had a kitten in his pocket, who had just then driven her claws into his leg.

"Yes, we fear that nothing can be done."

"E-ow!" said Pandora, and Miss Dillam jumped. "What was that?" she asked.

"Oh, only some noise in the street. Surely Mrs. Dillam will rally again. She has had these attacks before, has n't she?"

"Oh, yes, but not so bad. Why, only the other night she said — Mr. West, what is the matter?"

"Oh, no, she did n't!" said West with a smile. "I think I sat on a pin, that's all. Go on."

"She said very softly, 'Nellie, I hear a mouse.'"

IN A COAT-POCKET

"Dear me," said West. "Did she indeed?"

"Yes, and what makes it so bad is that there was no mouse in the room."

"I should think it would have been much worse if there had been."

"No, because it simply proves that Grandma is growing to imagine things that are n't so."

"E-ow!" said Pandora, who was becoming talkative at the mention of mice.

"Mr. West, there must be a cat in this carriage! and I hate cats. Let's get out and walk."

"Do you think it's right to condemn Grandma for hearing mice, when you hear things that are so much more unlikely?" asked West. "How can there possibly be a cat in the carriage? There's no room under the seat."

"No, but I've heard it cry twice."

"How strange! But perhaps it goes in your family to think you hear things. Still, you look perfectly well, so I would n't let it worry me. You will doubtless get over it."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“ I don’t think it ’s quite kind in you to joke about Grandma’s illness,” said Miss Dillam, coldly ; and West groaned inwardly, knowing what a brute he must seem. Still, if she hated cats !

“ Here ’s a florist,” he exclaimed, joyfully grasping at an idea. “ Would you mind stopping while I get some flowers for Mrs. Dillam ? ”

The girl relented visibly and said : “ Why, how lovely of you to think of it ! I ’ll come and help you choose them.”

“ Oh, no — really — I want them as a surprise for you too,” he finished lamely. And she leaned back in the hansom well pleased.

“ Here, put a nice bunch of violets in a basket with this cat,” he said to the astonished florist, “ and send them to Miss Van Camp, No. 3 West Ninety — Street. Give me a blank card, please.” And he scribbled hastily, “ Returned to you in hopes of finding you in a gentler mood.”

“ Now I want some old-fashioned garden

IN A COAT-POCKET

flowers — anything pretty. Oh, have n't you any in ? ”

“ We are expecting some asters at six o'clock, sir. Would those suit you ? I can send them immediately.”

“ Oh, I suppose so. Another card, please,” and he wrote his name, adding, “ Trusting that you will make a speedy recovery,” and gave Mrs. Dillam's address. Then he hurried back to the cab, so overjoyed at having parted with that terrible kitten that he quite forgot his recent intention of surprising Miss Dillam.

The surprise came, however, soon after dinner, and it was a surprise for himself as well.

“ Nellie, what do you think has happened ? ” asked Miss Dillam's aunt, coming into the room in a high state of indignation. “ Some disgusting joker has just sent mother a cat in a basket with a most unkind message about hoping to find her in a better humor. Poor mother was wild, because she hates cats — this person must have known it — And the cruelty of saying that

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

he had returned it in the hope of finding her in a gentler mood ! ”

West felt his face growing crimson, but managed to ask : “ Was there nothing else in the basket ? ”

“ Oh, nothing but the remains of some flowers that the cat had chewed to pieces. It was kicking them when I put it out into the yard. It seems like a very fierce cat. ”

“ Put it out—oh, by Jove ! ” exclaimed West, in despair. “ Would you mind if I went out and brought it in ? I have a friend who ’s in desperate need of a cat. ”

“ Why, certainly not, if you want the creature, ” said the elder Miss Dillam, disapprovingly. And West admitted with shame that he did.

“ If I don’t wring that florist’s neck ! ” he muttered, as an obliging butler conducted him through the lower regions of the house to the court behind. But when he reached it he found an overturned basket, containing only the chewed remains of some violets, while Pandora was nowhere to be seen.

IN A COAT-POCKET

"Well, I am up against it now," he thought, "with both of those girls. But what has become of that wretched cat?"

He called her alluringly for several minutes, but his tones were not sweet, and Pandora, listening from her cosy retreat in the garbage-can, distrusted him.

"Not I," she thought. "I prefer not to confide my person again to a man who rides in cabs, and puts me down in shops on a floral cross made of wet tuberose. Why, my paws are n't dry yet."

So West returned to the house and found his young friend still resentful toward the person who had arranged the insulting jest.

"Poor Grandma is always so patient and good," she said. "I can't understand why the man who sent the cat should have hoped to find her in a gentler mood."

"Are you sure it was a man?" asked West, with a feeble smile.

"Well, it could n't have been a *gentleman*."

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“Has n’t it occurred to you that the basket might have been intended for some one else?”

“I don’t see why. The address was all right.”

“Miss Dillam,” said the young man recklessly, “I can’t bear to have your grandmother made uncomfortable, so I’m going to make a clean breast of all the traps and disasters that this depraved cat has led me into to-night. It belongs to Miss Van Camp, and crept into my coat-pocket while I was calling there. I did n’t discover it until just before I met you, and then —”

“So it *was* a cat that I heard in the carriage,” said Miss Dillam, coldly. “I can believe almost anything of you now.”

“But how could I help it?” protested the poor man. “You said you hated cats, so I got rid of it as soon as I could without letting you know. The only trouble was that the florist mixed up the addresses and sent the wrong package here.”

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"I see," said the girl, after a chilly silence. "I will go up and explain to Grandma."

"And please take her all sorts of apologies," said West, eagerly. "Of course she knows me well enough to understand that it was a mistake. But I think I'll say good-night now, Miss Dillam. I must explain to Miss Van Camp too, or she'll be scouring the city hospitals after Pandora."

"And I suppose you consider that absurd kitten more important than all poor Grandma's state of mind," said Miss Dillam, unfeelingly. "Good-night, Mr. West."

And the dismayed youth took his departure, having previously interviewed the butler and offered him all kinds of rewards if Pandora were found.

"I'll keep my heye hout, sir," he promised, and West strode up the Avenue, thinking, "How I do hate people without a sense of humor! Annabel has that, even if she does think I'm conceited. Well, I suppose she won't speak to me after this." And as the

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interview did not promise to be a pleasant one, he decided to walk in order to gain time. "How shall I break it to her!" he thought when he rang the bell.

"Come right in, West," said Elga, cordially. "Van Camp's there." And she ushered him into the parlor where Annabel sat reading, with a large cluster of old-fashioned asters on the table beside her.

"Well, how did you like—" began West but stopped short, unable to utter another word, for there on Annabel's knee sat Pandora, purring, and small as life.

"Have I been asleep this whole evening?" he exclaimed, "or—or worse? Annabel, would you mind telling me where you got that cat?"

"She was given me by a German friend two weeks ago."

"Oh, but you know what I mean. When did she come back to-night?"

"Come back! Why, has she been away?" asked Annabel, with dancing eyes. "I never

IN A COAT-POCKET

allow her to go out alone after dark. She's too young."

"Oh, well, you have it in for me now, I suppose," said the young man, sitting down; "and it serves me right for going off in such a huff this afternoon."

"Oh, now that you're good, I'll tell you that Nellie Dillam sent Pandora back to me five minutes ago, with a note asking me not to tell you that she'd been found. Pandora trotted into their kitchen soon after you left. But Nellie didn't want you to know, because she said that when they first told you about Grandma's present you didn't look sorry at all; you looked amused."

Here they both broke into a laugh that carried away the last trace of their little quarrel that afternoon.

"What did you think when the asters came?" he asked. And Annabel blushed, but did not tell him how angry she had been at his card saying that he hoped she would make a speedy recovery.

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“That’s a rude way of implying that he wants me to forget him,” she had thought. “And these asters are the sort of flowers that a very old lady would enjoy. He is the most unpleasant man alive, and I *have* forgotten him. I don’t even remember having met such a person.” But what she said was, “I’m sorry that I wasn’t a little pleasanter to you this afternoon,” and offered him Pandora’s paw to shake.

A PINK TEA

CHAPTER SEVEN

A PINK TEA

ONE morning Annabel found Gideon sitting on the steps outside her door, plunged in gloom.

“Why, what’s the matter?” she asked.

“Aunt Pen’s found out about Hominy. She says I’ve got to sell him.”

“Sell him! Why, did n’t she know he was yours that night when he hid in the wash-boiler?”

“No, she thought it was a borrowed rabbit. You know she often sees me going up to the roof with other fellows and their animals.”

“But why does she object to your keeping him if he does n’t come downstairs?”

“She said I deceived her about it. But I did n’t. She never asked me if I had a rabbit,

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and I never mentioned it because she hates animals. I wish you'd speak to her, Miss Annabel. P'r'aps you could make her change her mind."

"I will," she said; "although it is none of my business, and will probably do more harm than good."

She ran upstairs and was fortunate enough to meet Mrs. Moles just as she was starting for market.

"Good morning," said Annabel, pleasantly.

"I can't say that I think so," was the tart reply; and indeed it did look very much like rain.

"I came to speak to you about Gideon," began Annabel; and immediately Mrs. Moles bristled.

"What mischief's he been up to now?"

"Oh, no mischief at all. He seems like a very good child. There's nothing like owning a pet to keep a boy out of mischief."

"I should say it led him into the worst. Why, that rabbit of Gideon's ate up a whole

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plate of good macaroni on me, with tomatoes in it, too."

"But he does n't really need that sort of food, you know. Almost anything else would do."

"Well, I don't choose to have Gideon wasting his time on such trifles as rabbits. I did n't adopt him for any such purpose, and I'll thank you to excuse me now, Miss, as I'm in a hurry."

"But what's the use of making him unhappy?" asked Annabel, indignantly. "Harmless enjoyment can't possibly be bad for any child. He needs it."

"Please let me pass, young lady. When you've brought up a large family of your own it will be time enough for you to give advice to others." And she walked stiffly downstairs, nearly tumbling over Gideon, who was curled up against the banisters.

"You go get that rabbit of yours and sell him," she said, "or I'll sell him myself — to the butcher."

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"Gid-e-on!" called Annabel, softly, as she heard a stifled sob from below.

He came up slowly and found Annabel's eyes shining with a new idea. She opened her purse and took out a bright half-dollar, saying, "I want to buy a rabbit, Gideon. I've wanted one for a long time. And I shall need some one to help take care of him for me."

Gideon's face cleared. "But that will be just the same as if he was mine."

"Just the same — except that if he's my rabbit no one can take him away from us."

"Oh, you're the best girl in the world!" said Gideon, giving her a big hug. "I wish you were my mother. 'T would be so jolly to have one my own age."

"Don't you think I'm more than eleven?" asked Annabel, laughing.

"You're just as nice as if you were n't."

"And oh, Gideon —"

"Yes."

"I'll have Elga save some scraps for him

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every day. Don't you want to bring him down now, and see what Pandora says to her new brother?"

"She's seen him before," said Gideon, racing joyfully upstairs. "She does n't care for him much."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Anna-bel, when Gideon reappeared. "I think that all the other animals would like Pandora better if she gave a party, don't you?"

"Well, I just guess!" said Gideon, holding Hominy's ears up to the light, to admire the red embroidery of veins, which were his especial pride.

"I'll ask Pandora to write the invitations to-morrow. And next Saturday afternoon —"

"What?" asked Gideon breathlessly.

"You'll see. I'm going to invite Weasels to bring his cat instead of the dogs. He told me he had one."

On the following day the invitations were sent:

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

MISS PANDORA VAN CAMP

AT HOME

FROM THREE TO FIVE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER TWENTY-NINTH

And promptly as the hour struck, Gideon presented himself, carrying Bachelor, whose mother had said that he might come.

Hominy was already there, adorned with a huge bow of bright ear-pink, and Pandora wore a paper ruff of the same shade, to say nothing of a pink nose which exactly matched. The table held a cluster of pink carnations, and Annabel herself had on a pink gown, trimmed with soft white lace.

“This is to be a pink tea,” she explained, coming forward to shake hands with Bachelor and Gideon, “because all *débutantes* begin with a pink tea, and this is Pandora’s coming out party.”

“Does n’t Bachelor look nice, too?” asked

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Gideon, bashfully; and Annabel saw that the cat wore one of Gideon's own neckties — a red one with blue polka dots, which was usually kept for Sunday school.

"He looks lovely!" she said warmly. "Those dots help to bring out his tabby stripes. It's perfect."

"Yes, if he'd been a dotted cat I should have put on a striped ribbon, 'cause when a cat's dressed up he likes to have it show."

Just then Constantia, the little Southern neighbor, arrived with Miss Harry, who was, as the French writers say, "delicious," in a wreath of artificial corn flowers. Constantia herself wore white with a corn-flower blue sash, so the effect of the two guests was charming.

"Here comes Weasels!" called Gideon, looking out of the window. "He's got on his best pants."

Weasels came in, holding under one arm a cat whom Pandora recognized in delight, for it was no other than her old friend Robby.

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"I didn't know you were Weasels' cat," she said, running to meet him. "Come, let's get the flannel rat." But Robby was too shy to play, and fidgeted under the haughty glances of Miss Harry. "I didn't know you were going to dress," he said uneasily. "Do I look very bad?"

But Pandora comforted him by saying that as far as she was concerned he was always the handsomest cat in the room.

"Now we're all here but Eunice and Kenneth," said Annabel; "and I think they must be coming now. I hear the elevator. Yes, there's the bell."

"Who are they?" asked Gideon, in a whisper.

"Two dear little friends of mine from Montrose. They're going to bring their tortoise-shell cat, Weejums."

In a minute a little girl with yellow curls came in, followed by a big and a little boy, carrying a basket.

"Oh, I say, Annabel!" the big boy ex-

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claimed. "This is just the sort of thing that mother gets up. Are n't you great!"

"The kind that mother used to make," quoted Annabel, laughing. "It was good in you to come, Franklin."

"Somebody had to bring the kids," he said, not liking to admit that nothing would have induced him to stay away.

"Weejums was car-sick, I think," said Eunice, with concern. "She stopped purring after we left Newark."

"Oh, Miss Annabel, whose rabbit?" asked the small boy, making straight for Hominy. "Where did you get that rabbit, Miss Annabel?"

"Kenny, you must n't; you must speak to the party first," said Eunice, and Kenneth turned around with Hominy pressed to his bosom, saying, "How de do, party?"

"He knows better, truly," said Eunice to Gideon, who had not taken his eyes from her curls. "Only rabbits make him forget."

"That used to be my rabbit once," said

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Gideon, mournfully. "It's easy to forget all your troubles — when you have a rabbit."

"Oh, why did you give him away?" asked Eunice, with such sympathy that the tears came to Gideon's eyes.

"Aunt made me sell him. She doesn't care for rabbits."

"What a shame," said Eunice. "Mother likes rabbits almost as much as if they were us. She loves everything that is little and young."

"I haven't any mother," said Gideon, after a pause, and Eunice slipped her hand softly into his.

"I'll be a mother to you," she said, so earnestly that Gideon laughed.

"Wow!" called Weejums Wood from the seclusion of her basket, and Franklin said, "Why, Eunice, you've forgotten your child."

"No, I had n't," returned Eunice, hastily. "Only I wanted her to get cooled off before she met these other cats. You know Weejums' temper."

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"I should think I did," was the disgusted reply. "Our whole family is ruled by it."

"I haven't any white rabbit now," said Kenneth to Constantia, by way of opening a conversation, "have you?"

"Certainly not," she replied with a little laugh.

"Well, lots of people do," said Weasels, resenting her lofty tone. "I have myself."

"I reckon you have!" she said, with such scorn that Weasels turned away, growling sullenly, "You can't prove it."

"What a singularly handsome cat," said Bachelor to Miss Harry, as Weejums was lifted from her travelling basket. "Quite the prettiest I ever saw. I shall go make her acquaintance." And he walked confidently across the floor, lifting his false tail.

"H'm!" said Miss Harry, spitefully. "I don't care for a pink nose myself. I think that a lady's nose should always match her dress." (Miss Harry's own nose was brown like her fur.)

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But Pandora said nothing, for she especially admired that deep shade of pink, and thought that if a lady's nose always matched her dress, how funny Elga would look with a nose to



“WHAT A SINGULARLY HANDSOME CAT”

match her new green calico, spotted with yellow snakes.

“Ha-ftzt!” said Weejums, as Bachelor started to address her; and he retired hastily across the room with a scratch on his nose.

“A vision of loveliness,” he said, as he sat down once more beside Miss Harry, “but shy.”

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Meanwhile Annabel and Gideon had been arranging two rows of chairs like the seats in a train, and now Gideon was ringing a bell, and calling, "All aboard for Yellowstone Park! Step lively, please."

"Tickets!" said Annabel, holding out strips of pink paper. "I'm the ticket office, gentlemen; step right along."

"I don't need one for my cat," said Eunice. "Children in arms carried free."

"I don't need one for Robby, either," said Weasels. "He's under five."

"Mine ain't," said Gideon, as Bachelor stalked along beside him. "Tickets for two adults, please."

"Relatives of the conductor ride free," said Annabel.

"All aboard, everybody!" sang out Gideon; and the children scrambled into the chairs, wondering what was coming next.

"Now we're off," said Annabel, who had taken the front seat with Pandora.

"Weejums' ribbon is off," said Eunice,

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anxiously. "Would you mind stopping the train while I go back and get it?"

"Now if that is n't just like Weejums," said Kenneth, patting Hominy's ears. "A rabbit would n't lose his ribbon off. He'd eat it."

Gideon pulled a make-believe cord, and the train came to a standstill.

"Here's your baby's garment, madam," he said, coming back with the lovely pale-blue bow that Weejums had shed before starting.

"Ding-dong! Here we go again. Ladies and gentlemen, let me call your attention to the great beauties of the landscape through which we are scorching. Yonder is the country seat of — of — well, of the Tammany Tiger."

And each cat was held up to a make-believe window in order to view her distant cousin.

"Popcorn! Peanuts!" called a new voice from the hall, and in came Professor Van Camp, with a basket on his arm and a boy's cap over one ear.

"Oh, Harold! how nice of you to come home so soon!" said Annabel, in delight.

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"Come home! why, I've been riding in the caboose the whole time. I'm Micky Finnegan, the train boy. Peanuts!" And he put a bag of them in the lap of every passenger, with a small bag of popcorn for the cats.

"We are now about to enter a tunnel," said Gideon, jumping off the train to pull down the window-shades, and the room became suddenly dark.

"Is n't this awful!" whispered Eunice to Constantia. "Don't you always feel nervous in a tunnel?"

"It is n't a real one, you know," said Constantia, quite failing to enter into the spirit of such a baby's game.

"Hi, look at that giraffe!" called Weasels, as they left the tunnel behind. "We're goin' through Africa now. See that monkey on a tree!"

"Papers, morning papers!" called the train boy, starting down the aisle again. "*Times, Herald, Tribune?*" And everybody bought the colored supplements, and Buster Brown

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pictures that Annabel had been collecting for this purpose. But as this was a free trip to-day, all the papers were sold for nothing, a method that really ought to be adopted on other trains. And before the passengers had finished their peanuts and read their papers, Gideon threw open a door into the hall, crying: "Hoboken! All change for Niagara Falls!"

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CHAPTER EIGHT

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THE children heard a great splashing of water, and followed Gideon into the bathroom, where the train boy stood waiting with an open umbrella, ready to show them the great falls.

"Come under two at a time so as not to get spattered," he said; and turned on a faucet in the bathtub.

A mild stream of water trickled out, and Weasels exclaimed: "Oh, turnips! is n't that superb!"

"Just look at the rainbows," said Eunice.

"I'm goin' fishin'," said Kenneth.

"Oh, how silly!" thought little Constantia, who had never played much with other children. But being well bred she kept her opinions to herself.

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"You have only two minutes left in which to catch the train," said Gideon, consulting a make-believe watch; and Annabel added, "Yes, hurry back, all of you. There's going to be a hold-up."

"Hurray!" shouted Weasels. "Let me do the holding."

"No, let me stop the train," said Kenneth. "I'll put a pin on the track."

"Well, you can both be highwaymen, then; but don't scream too loud."

The train started again, but suddenly there came a roar from outside, and Gideon rushed from the platform, crying: "We're boarded! We're burgled! Hide your valuables!" And every cat was smuggled out of sight beneath jackets and skirts.

"I'm a big, black polar bear," howled Kenneth, prancing into the car.

"You mustn't say that," corrected Weasels, from outside. "You're a robber and a cat-thief."

"I'm a cat-thief," said Kenneth, cheerfully,

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stopping before Constantia. "My little lady, have you a cat?"

"Yes," said Constantia, bravely. "But you can't have her."

"No, no," whispered Eunice. "That's not the game. You must pretend not to have one."

"I pretend not to have one," said Constantia.

"Wow!" cried Miss Harry, in muffled rage, from under Constantia's skirt.

"Ah!" said Kenneth, sternly. "You must give up the cat, for you have basely deceived me." And he handed Miss Harry to Weasels, who entered, scowling, with his hair pulled down over his eyes.

"What are you going to do with her?" asked Constantia, in terror.

"Carry her off to our mountain cave," threatened Weasels. But here Eunice came to the rescue again, whispering, "It's only the game, you know. They would n't hurt Miss Harry."

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“Madam, have you a cat?” asked Kenneth of Eunice. “If not, forever after hold your peace.”

“Knave — villain — rascal!” exclaimed Eunice. “Do I look like a Noah’s Ark?”

“Hold up your hands,” commanded the robber, fiercely.

“I can’t. If I let go of Weejums she’ll run away. She’s kicking awfully hard, and scratching my leg. Oh!”

“Then you also have deceived me,” said Kenneth, snatching the cat; “me, — a poor, hard-working robber, and father of twelve little orphan children. I will steal every cat on this train.” And he went through the car collecting the other animals — who seemed very glad to be set at liberty again — and went off to the door.

“Ten minutes for refreshments!” called the conductor, and all the passengers filed into the dining-room, where a little lunch-counter was arranged to look like those in railway stations. Sandwiches were piled in high glass

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dishes, a bunch of bananas swung from the ceiling, and a row of little pink paper bags contained each a crinkly cake with a P. in pink letters on the frosting. And for every guest there was a pink box of candy with a tiny photograph of Pandora's head on the cover.

"Oh, how sweet!" said Constantia, smiling at last, and Annabel gave her a little hug of gratitude, for she had feared until now that Constantia thought her too silly for a grown-up lady.

"Don't the cats draw any of these prizes?" asked Weasels, opening his eyes at the sight of Elga coming in with eight saucers of pink ice-cream.

"Just as soon as we're through," laughed Annabel. "You know the youngest should always be served last."

"Hominy's the youngest," said Gideon, "but he tried to be served first, because when I put him down in the kitchen he started to eat up the mat."

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“Has Miss Harry any kittens?” asked Eunice politely of Constantia.

“She never had but one,” said Constantia, as if kittens were something of a disgrace, “and that we gave away. Her name was Caroline Holly de Montpré, but she was n’t like a Southern cat at all. She was very common.”

“Do you call Weejums common?” asked Eunice, indignantly. “We think she’s very refined.”

“No indeed. Weejums has quite the air of a lady. She might almost be from Charleston.”

This did not comfort Eunice much, but as Constantia had the air of having paid Weejums a compliment, the matter was allowed to rest.

“Now everybody must pay a forfeit to get back his animal,” said Franklin, when the refreshments had disappeared. “I’ll hold them up, and we’ll take turns in saying what the owners must do.”

The children ran back to the sitting-room, where they found the cats amusing themselves

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according to taste. Robby and Pandora were having a fine game of rip-the-lace-curtains, to the great annoyance of Bachelor and Miss Harry, who sat in the window making comments on the passers-by; while Weejums, the resourceful, was calmly biting the young ends from the ferns in Annabel's jardinière.

"What does Eunice do to get this cat?" asked Franklin, plucking Weejums from her naughty task.

"She shall make a noise like — like a lobster salad," said Kenneth. And after a little thought, Eunice emitted something be-



"A FINE GAME OF 'RIP-THE-LACE-CURTAINS'"

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tween a shriek and a sneeze that satisfied the company.

"What must be done to recover this priceless pearl?" asked Franklin, waving Miss Harry aloft.

"She must say that Northern cats are as nice as Southern ones," said Eunice, quickly.

"I can't say that," objected Constantia, politely, "because it would n't be true."

"Say it! You've got to say it!" called all the children, almost as one voice; and Constantia looked uncomfortable.

"Well—I think Weejums is better than some Southern cats—the worst ones," she admitted, and with a flourish Miss Harry was placed in her arms.

"Now, Annabel," said Franklin, seizing Pandora. "Let's make her do something nice, fellows; sing a song, or give us a recitation."

"Pandora belongs to me too," said the Professor. "So we'll both recite a poem called 'The Cordial Cat,' and act it out."

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“Hurrah!” called Weasels. “Who ’ll be the cat?”

“I will,” said Annabel, “and Brother ’ll be Aunt Susan’s guest. Now listen, and don’t anybody laugh.”

The Professor began :

“Aunt Susan owned a cordial cat,
Who visitors beguiled ;
And when he heard the door-bell ring
He arched his back and smiled.”

Here Annabel had some trouble in arching her back, but the smile was more of a success.

“Aunt Susan dressed him in a ruff,
That he might better please.
And Thomas liked it well enough,
Although it made him sneeze.”

This part of the story was very well done, as Annabel looked quite puss-like in the newspaper collar that Brother arranged for her.

“But once a certain person called
Who would not cast an eye
Upon this charming animal,
And merely passed him by.”

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Here Annabel looked sad, and retired into a corner.

“ ‘ She ’s not responsive,’ Thomas thought,
‘ Perhaps I ’d better purr ; ’
And leaped upon her lap to try
His blandishments on her.”

At this point Annabel jumped into a plumply cushioned chair, and purred wonderfully.

“ But suddenly he found himself
Swung by the neck aloft,
And hurled head foremost from the house,
Although he spit and coughed.”

This was harder to do on account of Annabel’s size, but finally the Professor got her to the door, and the children heard her making cat noises from behind it.

“ Aunt Susan hurried to the door
With eyes both wide and pained.
‘ Oh, why ? ’ she gasped. The visitor smiled.
‘ I hate them,’ she explained.”

This was greeted with much applause, because it was so silly, the audience said. It was such a relief to find grown people who could

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be as silly as that. Usually one saw through them at once, and knew that they were not the real thing.

When the other forfeits had been paid, Annabel said, "Now will the cats please walk out to supper?" And in place of the railroad lunch that had been served in the dining-room, there stood a low table (made from old box covers propped on books), set with six little plates of raw oysters.

"Pandora, will you preside at the head of the table and Hominy at the foot?" asked Annabel, seriously, "so as to keep the conversation going at both ends?"

"Can't Robby sit beside Pandora?" asked Weasels. "He's so bashful with strangers."

"I've got hold of Weejums' tail," said Eunice, "in case she gets mad at anybody."

Hominy did not care for oysters, so a little mould of his namesake cereal had been prepared for him; but when Bachelor, who sat next to him, had eaten most of Hominy's oysters as well as his own, Hominy made a

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horrible effort and finished the last one himself. He afterwards regretted this, as his feelings were very strange, and prevented him from enjoying the next course, of milk served in little Japanese bowls.

“Each cat is urged to keep his bowl as a souvenir,” said Annabel; “and from the looks of things just now, I don’t think they’ll need to be washed.”

After refreshments came what Annabel called the Cats’ Grab Bag, which was a cunning nest of catnip balls, each attached to a long ribbon.

“We’ll shake the ribbons,” she said, “and let the cats pounce in turn. Whichever ribbon a cat grabs will belong to her ball.”

There was some trouble about this at first, as both Robby and the hostess seized three ribbons apiece, and lay down in them delightedly, winding them about each other’s hind legs. But presently they were untangled to await their turn, and each received a round catnip ball, made of bright calico, filled with “the reviving herb.”

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Then followed a wild rolling match, during which Miss Harry and Weejums forgot their dignity so much as to speak to each other, and when the children were tired of laughing at their antics it was time to go home.

"Do you live far from New York?" asked Gideon, wistfully, as Eunice came to say good-bye.

"No, only forty-five minutes. You must be sure and come out to see us. Miss Annabel will bring you, and p'r'aps some day we'll be having a party too."

"I've got a yellow rabbit at home," said Kenneth to Constantia. "I got it the Fourth of July instead of a cannon-cracker."

"We fire off our crackers at Christmas," said Constantia.

"Say, that's a fine scheme. You can get so many of them into a stocking."

"Oh, dear! I don't want to go home," said Weasels, thrusting Robby's bowl and catnip-ball inside his jacket.

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"Why do you, then?" asked Annabel, laughing. "Stay and spend the night."

"I'm going out to Grandma's for over Sunday," replied Weasels, politely. "But I thank you just the same."

"I've had a most enjoyable evenin'," said Constantia, so prettily that Annabel could not help kissing her; and the child added, "Miss Harry and I will make our party-call soon."

"Oh, where's Pandora? We must say good-bye to her too," said Eunice, putting Weejums into her basket.

"Yes, where's Pandora?" asked some one else.

But Pandora was nowhere to be found, because, in spite of the fact that she was giving a party, she had taken advantage of the general excitement to ride down on the dumbwaiter with the ice-cream freezer. And at the moment when Eunice asked for her, she was walking up Central Park West, between Ninety-ninth and One Hundredth Streets.

HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

CHAPTER NINE

A HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

“**C**OME now, if that is n’t cheek!” said Henry the fireman, in amazement. “Here’s a strange kitten curled up on Abraham’s back.”

The three fire horses stood patiently in their stalls, waiting for the practice alarm which would throw open the doors leading to the room where the truck stood. Two of these horses were white, but their leader was a big black fellow with flashing eyes, and a shining back as elastic as a leather cushion.

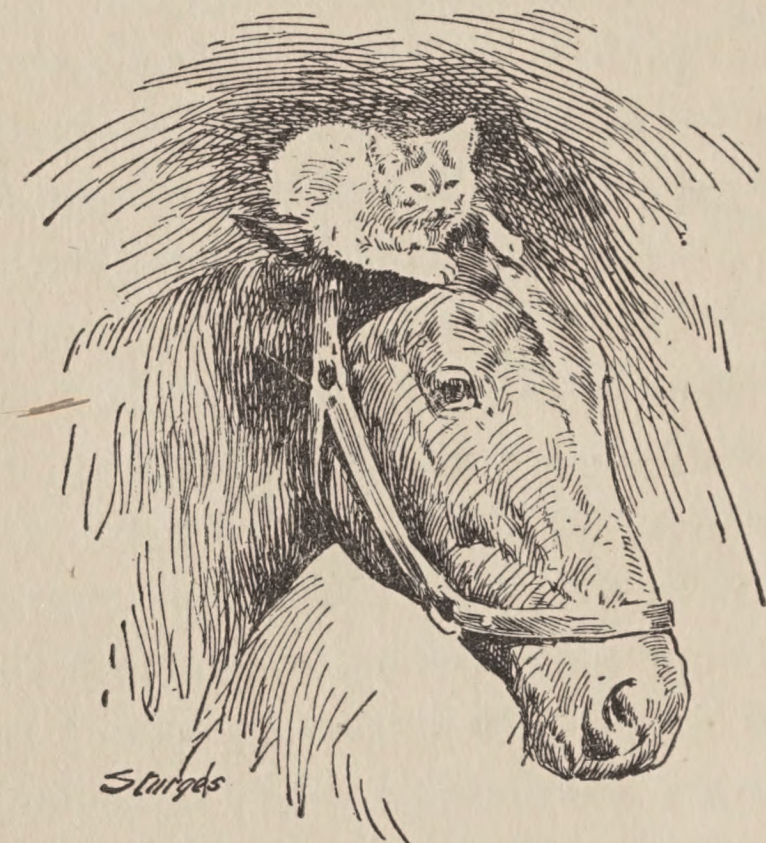
“A very comfortable bed,” Pandora had thought, when some boys chased her into the engine house from Columbus Avenue. “Such high legs, and a soft mattress. And it does n’t look like a folding bed either.”

So, to the surprise of Abraham, she “shinned” up his strong tail and went to sleep,

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

quite safe now from the attacks of those frolicsome boys.

“What sort of fly is this?” thought Abraham, twisting his neck around as far as it



“HER BED HAD TROTTED OUT TO THE FIRE-TRUCK”

would go. “It’s too big to be switched off, and yet it does n’t try to bite. But it buzzes,” for Pandora had begun to express her pleasure in a drowsy purr.

HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

"Well, Abraham, you've broke out with a new kind of measles, for sure," said Henry, laughing. "Now we'll see what happens when the gong strikes."

Clang! went a deafening bell; and Pandora barely had time to seize Abraham's mane with her claws before her bed had trotted out to the fire-truck, and the room was full of men sliding down a pole from a hole in the floor above.

"Take her off before the harness drops!" called Henry, fearing that the poor kitten would be stunned. But no fire harness waits for cat or man, and it came clattering down on the horses' backs, missing Pandora's nose by one inch, and her tail by another.

"Ha-ftzt!" spit Pandora, angrily, but did not offer to move.

"Got spunk, has n't it?" said Brian, another of the men.

"Let's keep it for a mascot," said a third.

"What's a mascot?" asked another.

"Something to eat?"

"No, it's something that brings good

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

luck — a kind of four-legged horseshoe with feelings.”

“Look at Abraham!” said Henry. “The old fool likes it.”

For when the harness was lifted again, Abraham did not trot back quickly to his stall, like the other horses. He picked his way along very carefully, as if he were carrying a baby, or something else that might break if he let it fall.

Henry and the other men roared with laughter, for Abraham was a proud, high-spirited beast, full of oats and temper, who never allowed any one to pet him.

“If it was only Candy, now,” Brian said. “Candy’s a regular old molly-coddle. But Abraham! Well, any cat that can boss Abraham can have me.”

So Pandora was adopted by the fire company, and learned to slide down the pole with the men when an alarm was sounded. The first trip of this kind was an accident, as in a wild fit of play she had fallen through the hole,

HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

and only saved herself by grasping the pole with her claws. After this the men made her slide down every day, and rewarded her with a bit of meat when she reached the floor.

But her favorite resting place was on Abraham's back, and she would neither fall nor jump off, if she happened to be there when an alarm was sounded.

"There's a new rule to be observed now before we're ready to start," said Henry, one day, with Pandora on his knee. "Down the pole — harness — helmets — and *take off the cat!*"

Many a time Pandora was left behind with injured feelings, while her old friend Abraham galloped snorting down the avenue, with the ladders rattling behind him, and Henry up in front, his arms stretched forward as if they would be pulled entirely off. Even Brian refused to stay and talk with her, although Pandora was always hoping that he would, for his place was at the end of the truck, and he swung on just as it left the stable, rode and off

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

flying up and down as if he were on a spring board.

“I wish I had n’t run away from Annabel,” she would think, gazing around the empty firehouse. “She was so much better than the janitor’s family; not that they weren’t kind, of course, but they never petted me, and seemed to think less of me than they did of Gottfried. But Annabel thought of me first, and it was not kind to leave her.”

“Are you intending to run away from us, too?” asked Addie May, the third fire horse, one night, as Pandora tiptoed along the edge of her stall.

“Not yet,” said Pandora. “There is still much to learn in this business. I don’t feel that I have mastered it.”

Addie May heaved a windy sigh, which nearly blew Pandora off her perch, and said, “The business is all right, but I’m not well.”

“Not well?” asked Pandora, in distress. “Why, what’s the matter?”

“I have a misery in my stomach,” was the

HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

sad reply. "You see how big my stomach is? Well, I have a misery to match the size."

The next day Henry discovered this misery, and a "vet" was called to see Addie May.

"No hay for a week," he prescribed after looking her over. "Bran mash and oats, but no hay." And Addie May sighed, for hay to her was a kind of Charlotte Russe, with butter-scotch and chocolate creams mixed in.

But Candy whinnied softly, "Never mind, old girl!" and the next morning Addie May was as drooping and listless as before. When the practice call came she crawled slowly out to the truck, and stood there with half-closed eyes.

"We'll have to turn her out to pasture," said Henry, "if she does n't show more life."

"She runs all right when a real alarm comes," said Brian.

"Yes, but that's nerves. Her heart is n't in it."

A few days later the "vet" came again, and after a quick glance at the horse, asked, "Why did n't you let up on the hay?"

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

"We did," said Henry. "She has n't had any for a week."

"Oh, has n't she?" was the scornful reply. "Look at that stomach. It's cram full of hay."

"I have the feeding of those horses," said Henry, angrily, "and I can swear that this one has n't touched hay for a week."

"Well, somebody's been stuffing her then for a joke. You'd better sit up with her to-night and see that there's no foul play."

So that evening, after the horses had been fed, Brian and Henry lit their pipes and sat down near the door, telling stories of different animals who had been their friends.

"That Candy, now," said Henry. "You know it was through me that he joined the force."

"The boys told me you trained him," said Brian.

"Well, you never heard how we first met, did you?"

"I presume you were kindly introduced by some mutual friend."

HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

"No, sir. He belonged to a no-account man in the town where I came from; the sort that never does a stroke of work and lets his wife support him. Well, one night when I dropped in at Stringer's bar this chap was there, loafing around. The boys were all guying him, and trying to make him talk, but I thought it was sort of mean, because he'd been a good sort before he took to whiskey. And then what do you suppose happened?"

"Give it up," said Brian.

"Well, the swinging doors were pushed open, and in came a white horse, a big fellow too, and walked straight up to where this man was sitting. He looked up and said, 'Well, Candy, I guess you're right. It's bedtime.' And stumbled out of the place, holding on to the horse's mane."

"'Say!' I asked the boys. 'Is this a private circus, or what?'"

"'Oh, no,' they said. 'That's his pet horse, and it always comes after him if he stays out too late. The man's wife turns it loose and

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

it hunts till it finds him. Several nights he's been so sleepy that we had to strap him on Candy's back, but he never refuses to go when Candy comes for him, and Candy has never failed to get him home all right.' "

" Good old Candy ! " said Brian, softly.

" Well, not long after that I got a job on the force, and as they always want bright horses I told them about Candy. They said they'd take him and I wrote, but the man would n't sell — said that Candy was his trained nurse. A few months later he died, and his widow wrote saying that she needed the money and that Candy was for sale. So we took up a subscription for her from all the engine houses, and, added to what the company paid, Candy fetched her the sum of four hundred dollars and sixty-two cents."

" Not a bad price for a plain horse," said Brian.

" Ah, but he was n't any plain horse — don't you believe it ! He had brains that were worth a thousand, and muscles that just needed training. He — "

HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

"What was that?" asked Brian, suddenly.

"I guess the cat turned over on Abraham's back. We'll go look, though."

They held a lantern up to the stalls, and found Pandora sleeping peacefully on her accustomed bed. But Addie May, the invalid, was placidly chewing a great bunch of hay!

"Good ghosts! where did she get that?" exclaimed Brian. "There's nobody else awake."

"Come away and watch," said Henry; so they crept out of sight and waited.

Presently Candy raised his head cautiously, saw no one looking, and filling his mouth with hay tossed it over into Addie May's manger.

"So that's who did it," said Brian, roaring with laughter; and Henry added, "Well, brains are n't always worth a thousand dollars more to the company."

The next night Addie May's stall was changed, and the fierce Abraham was placed between her and her friend. The story of Candy's shrewdness was told to everybody who visited the truck house, and the row of small

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

boys who gathered around at practice time drew a long breath and said, "Ah!" when they heard it. Then they brought sugar and caramels and peanut brittle, for it was because of Candy's passion for sweet things that he had received his name.

"Can't I ride out on the truck with you some day, Henry?" asked a very blond little boy with unpleasant eyes.

"No, kid, it's against rules. You'd be shaken off at the first corner."

But the blond little boy would not be discouraged. "Can't I go out with you just a little way?" he asked the next afternoon.

"No, sonny, we don't carry passengers on trucks. We go out for business."

Pandora, who was sitting on Henry's knee, listened attentively, hoping to learn now where it was that Henry and Brian and the horses went, when the bell sounded. But nothing more was said, and the next day the boy came again.

"Can't I ride out on the trucks with you

HOOK AND LADDER KITTEN

to-day?" he asked. And Henry brought his feet down from the door-jamb with a stamp, saying "No!" so loudly that Pandora spit, and rounded up her back on his shoulder.

"All right for you," said the boy, casting a quick glance at Pandora. "I s'pose you think a heap of that cat?"

"Yes, she's our mascot, and brings us luck. We haven't had an accident since she joined the force."

"Huh!" said the unpleasant little boy, shuffling off unpleasantly. But to Henry his absence could never be anything but a treat.

That evening there was an alarm, and while the truck-house was almost deserted, the blond little boy crept back and found Pandora sleeping on a carriage sponge in the corner. He thrust her inside his jacket, saying, "Now I guess you won't bring 'em any more luck!" and, turning off Columbus Avenue, hurried towards the river.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

CHAPTER TEN

FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

“**N**OW, what’s going to happen next?” thought Pandora, with interest.

It did not occur to her that any one could mean harm to such an attractive little person as herself, and when the boy ran down to the track beside the river, she thrust her head out eagerly to see what game they were to play. Gottfried and Gideon had both played delightful games with her, so she imagined that all boys were little gentlemen, who knew how to treat a ladylike little kitten.

She caught a glimpse of a man strolling past, followed by two dogs, and although the man did not notice the blond little boy, the dogs did.

“Bad luck to Henry!” he said, holding Pandora up by the neck; and before she could speak, he threw her out into the water, as far as

FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

his wretched little arm could make her go. Fortunately this was not far ; but Pandora was too frightened by the suddenness of the attack to swim. Her breath failed and she was about to sink, when there came a pat-a-splash in the water beside her, and something seized her by the back.

“A fish!” she thought in terror. “A monstrous sardine!” But the sardine did not attempt to eat her, and presently she felt her tail out of water, as something carried her ashore and laid her on the grass.

“Good gracious, Blarney! what have you got there — a rat?” asked a man’s voice. And through a shower of wet bangs came a yelp that Pandora seemed to have heard before.

The other dog came up too, and instead of worrying Pandora, licked her with a recognizing tongue.

“Why, it’s Conrad — Weasels’ Conrad!” she exclaimed. And Conrad wagged his far-away tail so hard that the wag actually wiggled up to his ears.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“ I guess you ’re alive now, ain’t ye? ” asked the man, picking up the kitten. “ It ’s too bad Charley ’s gone to Grandma’s. He’d like the job of nursin’ ye. Never mind, I ’ll do my best.” So he rolled Pandora in a big red handkerchief and started for home, with Conrad and Blarney barking madly at his heels.

“ Got another baby for ye, mother,” he said, as he opened the door of his flat. “ One that Blarney hauled out of the river.”

And somebody from the kitchen called out rudely, “ Hot air ! ”

“ Well, the poor little tike,” said Weasels’ mother, coming forward tenderly. “ If she is n’t a sight ! I ’ll just get her a sup of something hot to drink.”

“ Ah, how do you do? ” called the strange voice again, as Pandora was placed on a pillow by the stove.

“ How de do, ma’am,” she said faintly, not wishing to be thought rude.

“ Ae – ow ! ” came in familiar tones from the

FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

kitchen, as Weasels' mother returned, carrying a saucer of hot milk.

"No, Robby, it's not for you," she said, taking Pandora on her knee. But to her surprise Robby forgot the milk at the sight of that pitiful bundle, ending in a wet and mournful tail.

"O Pandora!" he cried in distress, "can this be you?" and rubbed his warm face against hers until it was nearly dry — making little soft "P-u-r-r mew" calls of sympathy and love.

"Now ain't he got a big heart!" said Weasels' father, admiringly. "He's just as foolish as the rest of us."

"Hot air!" shrieked the rude voice again; and Pandora shivered.

"Now, Polly, you just keep quiet," said the man, going to the door. "What do you mean by scarin' a poor, wet little lady that's fell in the river like little Eva in Uncle Tom's Cabin. You're a shockin' old bird, with no more manners than a hen."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

"My name ain't Polly, it's Rosa," came the gentle retort.

"Well, then, Rosa, hush up."

"Come, Blarney, Blarney, Blarney!" called Rosa, in a voice exactly like Weasels' own. But Blarney, who was drying by the stove, only smiled out of one eye, and did not move. Had he not seen Charley off to Grandma's that very day? So he smiled out of the other, too, when Conrad hurried from the room in hopes that Weasels might have returned and brought something for Blarney to eat, which Conrad, being first on the scene, could secure. But there was no one in the kitchen except Rosa, who sat eating a sandwich composed of a feather and a piece of paper, and who, when she saw Conrad, turned upside down on her swing and chuckled, "Hot air!"

Pandora kept hoping that Weasels would come home and recognize her, so that she could be returned to the Van Camps. But Weasels had, as usual, gone to spend Sunday with Grandma, and the next morning his

FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

father and mother prepared to join him there.

"What'll we do with this extra cat?" asked the man, whose name, it seems, was Mr. Lawrence.

"Why, leave it here with Rosa and plenty to eat, just as we leave Robby," said Mrs. Lawrence. "When we get back to-morrow Charley can find a home for it."

"Surprising how lively it seems to-day," said her husband, with a laugh, as Robby and Pandora capered sideways through the door.

"Oh, she's got eight lives left out of the nine. There was n't more than one killed yesterday."

She went around the room arranging saucers of milk at different levels, one on the table and one on the mantelpiece, so that the cats would have to hunt to find them.

"That prevents them from eating all they've got within the next five minutes," she said. "Now for Rosa's dinner."

She fed Rosa and put a fresh carpet on the

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

floor of her cage, the carpet being a copy of the *Herald* with a large picture of the Mayor on it.

"Ah! how do you do?" asked Rosa, amiably; but as the picture did not respond, she tore it to pieces with her strong beak, and lay on her back among the fragments, kicking them with her claws.

"Now just wait till I tell your father on you," said Mrs. Lawrence, severely. "And him a good Republican. Father, Rosa's a Democrat. She's taken the Mayor apart and is playing ball with his nose."

Presently they called Conrad and Blarney, who were to be left with the people on the ground floor, and went out, locking the door.

"Come, kitty, kitty, kitty!" came in Mrs. Lawrence's voice from the kitchen, and Pandora ran, thinking that she might have returned; but it was only that wicked Rosa, still toying with the Mayor's nose.

"You'll learn better next time," said Robby, smiling, as Pandora reappeared.

FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

The two kittens played until they were tired, then slept; but were soon awakened by hearing a great commotion in the hall. Some one was running, and shouting "Fire!" And after that came the sound of more running, while a puff of smoke floated in through the keyhole.

The curtains in the second-floor flat had blown into a lamp, and soon the whole place was ablaze.

"Is everybody out? Is everybody out?" people were asking in the street below, and some one said, "Yes, there's no one in the third-floor flat. The Lawrences are out of town. We're all safe."

Yes, all safe but two dear little kittens and a frightened parrot, who were locked in the stifling third-floor apartment, unable to escape. If Rosa had been in the front part of the house her voice might have been heard, but as she was in the kitchen all her cries were drowned by shouts in the street.

Robby and Pandora were balanced on the

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

window-ledge, getting what air they could, when suddenly they heard the clang of a new bell, and around the corner came a hook-and-ladder truck, with Abraham in the lead, and Candy and Addie May pulling gallantly on either side. There was Henry driving, and Brian on behind, with his legs jiggling up and down just as Pandora had seen them fifty times before, when they started on their mad trips. And now at last she understood where they all went, when the gong sounded.

"Is everybody out?" she heard Brian ask, and mewed piteously to tell him of their dreadful danger; but he could not hear, and the janitor answered, "All out, sir."

It was so hot in the room now that Robby had retired into a pail of water, and sat there calmly, all covered but his head.

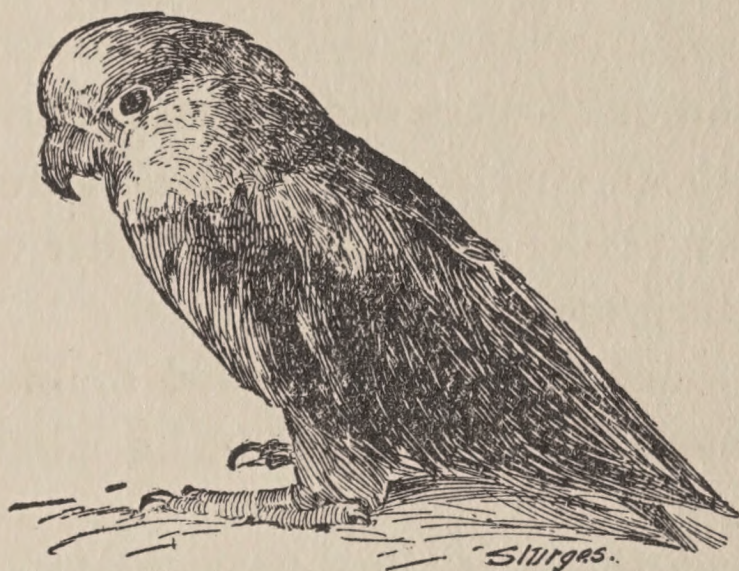
"I say, what's that in the window?" called Henry, from his high seat on the truck. "I saw something move. Are you sure everybody's out?"

"I see something too," said another man, as

FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

the smoke rolled away. "Oh, it's nothing but a cat."

"Did you see a cat there?" asked Brian, laying hold of a ladder. "Here, boys, put her up — steady — pull — third floor. I ain't



ROSA

going to let a cat burn if I can help it." He scaled the ladder quickly, and took Pandora in his arms. There was a funny splash, and Robby leaped from the pail to his shoulder, whisking a dripping tail into the fireman's eyes.

"Hot air!" moaned a stifled voice from the kitchen. "Oh, how do you do?"

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Hot air? I should say so!” repeated the man. “The brutes have left a child locked in that room.”

He made a brave dash for the kitchen and brought out, not a child, but a well-smoked parrot, who kept calling for Blarney and Kitty by turns.

“Your first remark was the most descriptive,” said Brian, as with the perspiration streaming from his face he came down the ladder with his rescued friends.

“Hurrah for Brian!” called some one in the crowd, and all the onlookers joined in a mighty cheer.

“It ain’t nothin’ but animals,” said a tearful woman, “but he’d have done just the same if it had been young ones. I’d trust my kids to a man who would n’t let even a kitten burn!”

And meanwhile Brian was making a most amazing discovery.

“It’s our cat! It’s Abraham’s orphan!” he called, holding Pandora up for Henry to

FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

see; and one of the other firemen said, "Well, you got your reward all right this time."

"He's saved the mascot! Bully for Brian!" said Henry, laughing in surprise and delight. "But how the dickens did they get hold of our cat? If those folks were n't out I'd make it hotter for them than the fire did."

But by this time the fire engines had done their work, and the Lawrences' flat did not burn, although the smoke would have killed the animals if they had stayed there a few minutes longer.

"We'll take charge of the parrot and the kitten," said a neighbor. "Upon my word I feel guilty to have forgotten them. Charley would have cried his eyes out if anything had happened to Robby and Rosa. But that other cat is n't theirs. That's a stray."

"Allow me to correct you, madam," said Brian, raising his helmet. "That kitten is the head and chief member of the hook-and-ladder company at No. 6—Columbus Avenue, basely decoyed from her home. If it had n't been for

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

this fortunate incident of the fire we might never have seen her again."

Henry turned the horses around, and Brian swung on behind the ladders, with Pandora in his pocket. The bell sounded, the sparks flew from under the horses' feet, and the truck drove slowly back up the avenue, followed by a procession of small boys.

"We've broken our rules for you, though, young lady," said Brian, rubbing Pandora's head with rough tenderness. "Only yesterday Henry was telling that fish-eyed boy we did n't carry passengers on this truck."

"Passengers?" repeated Henry, turning round with a grin. "Why, that cat ain't a passenger. She's the boss of this force!"

LITTLE ARBUTUS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

LITTLE ARBUTUS

THE next day people read in the paper how the hook-and-ladder company of a certain district had lost its mascot, and found it again in the window of a burning building.

"It was that fish-eyed boy who took her, I'm sure," said Henry. "I doubt if he hangs around here much more."

And indeed the blond little boy never dared put his unpleasant face inside the truck-house again, because he somehow received the impression that he was not wanted.

"Do you know, it was rather fun riding on the truck the other day," said Pandora to Candy. "I think I shall try it again."

"I would n't if I were you," said Candy. "You're too small."

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

But of course this only made Pandora more determined to do it, as no child likes to be told that lack of age and size should interfere with any plan one chooses to make. So she sought out certain empty holes in among the ladders, and one day when she was curled up there an alarm sounded.

Bang! went the doors of the box stalls. Clip, clip, clip, came the eager hoofs, and down rattled the harness, followed by many legs from the room above. Clang — rush — gallop! and the truck was off.

“Hi — yi — fire!” yelled the small boys, starting after it with hopeful feet that were soon left far behind.

“Ow—wow!” wailed Pandora, as the truck rounded a corner, for riding among the ladders was very different from riding in Brian’s soft pocket.

“Cat’s aboard!” called somebody, with a laugh. But Henry’s eyes never left his rushing horses, and he did not smile. Near one of the Park entrances a nurse was wheeling a

LITTLE ARBUTUS

little crippled boy in a chair. Her eyes were turned in another direction, and the tooting of an automobile drowned the sound of the approaching bell.

Clang ! clang ! it went, but neither the nurse nor the child looked around, and in order to save them Henry drove his horses straight into the stone coping with a crash that threw every fireman to the street.

The woman screamed and hurried out of the way with her chair, and the child began to cry at the sight of the three horses tangled in a frightened heap.

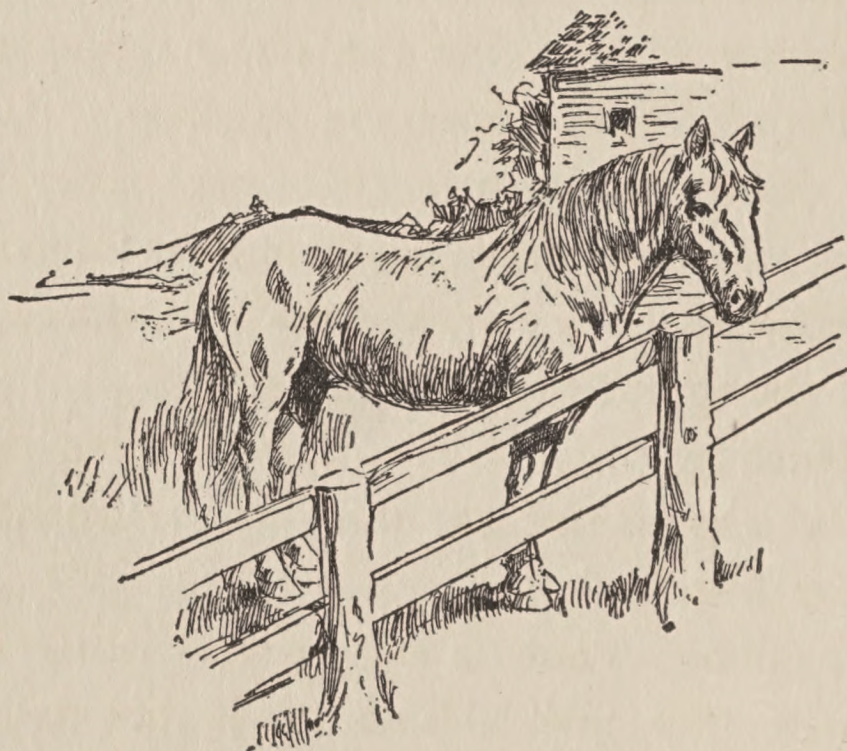
“Cut the traces ! cut the traces !” shouted Henry, who, being strapped to his seat, was on the only man left on the truck. And as the bruised firemen picked themselves up they ran to the horses’ heads, and kept them quiet until the harness could be unfastened.

Then Abraham and Addie May struggled to their feet, and stood trembling in the midst of the wreck. But the gentle Candy did not rise, for his days of usefulness as nursemaid

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

and as fireman were over. It was found that he had a broken leg.

"Get back there, get back!" called the policemen to the crowd, as the truck was freed and the two remaining horses reharnessed.



"HIS DAYS OF USEFULNESS AS FIREMAN WERE OVER"

"What are you going to do?" asked some one, breathlessly.

"Going to the fire," said Henry, grimly.
"What are we here to do?" And stopping

LITTLE ARBUTUS

only a second to stroke poor Candy's nose, the men rattled off on their errand of rescue.

"What will you do with the horse?" asked a man with a very pale face, who had joined the nurse and the lame child.

"Shoot him," said the policeman. "He's crippled, you see. He can never run again."

"Papa! Papa!" cried the little boy. "This poor horse is like me. He can never run again. But you won't let them shoot him?"

"How much is the horse worth?" asked the man, taking out his purse.

"Nothing, sir, if you care to keep him. But he's quite useless now. It's a cruelty to let him live."

"I don't know about that," said Mr. Homer. "I have a farm up in the country where he could do light work after his leg is set, and get lots of enjoyment out of life. I'll keep the horse, please. He saved my boy from being killed. Can you telephone to a good veterinary for me?"

The policeman pocketed his dollar and

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

hurried away, while the crowd cheered, and little John was wheeled up in his chair to comfort his injured friend.

"I love you because you are lame," he whispered, looking down into Candy's sad eyes. And Candy whinnied lovingly in return.

Soon the horse-doctor came, with splints and a queer-shaped cart, on which Candy was taken away. And the crippled child followed the crippled horse down the avenue with understanding eyes.

When the collision occurred, Pandora had been thrown over the wall into the park, and was now lying under a bush, nursing a bruised paw.

"There are three of us now," she thought, "but Candy and I are both better off than the boy, because he has n't an extra set of legs."

She kept out of sight, watching the children at play, and the squirrels who ran up to beg for peanuts. But nobody came to look for her, and she began to wonder if Brian and Henry had forgotten that they owned a cat. The truth was that there had been a big fire on

LITTLE ARBUTUS

the East Side, and when the truck started back it was too dark to stop and look for disobedient kittens. The next morning Henry went to the place of the accident and hunted everywhere, but did not find their mascot because she had been carried away by a dear little girl, who had hurried through the park just as Pandora was beginning to give up all hopes of supper.

This little girl had on pink stockings, which looked funny with her stout boots, and a lace scarf over her tightly crimped hair.

"*Eile dich — eile dich!*" the woman beside her was saying, and as this was the same language that Gottfried spoke, Pandora knew that the woman wanted the little girl to hurry.

"Oh, but the poor little kitty is lame," the child said, stopping to examine Pandora's paw. "I'm going to take her to the theatre with me."

"A lame cat to the theatre!" exclaimed the mother. "Will they let you in carrying a little street beggar?"

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

"Oh, they'll have to, because I'm the Queen of the Arbutus, and it can't blossom without me."

"Little stupid!" said the mother. "Well, I can't blame you for the soft heart that I myself gave you. But hide it well under your cape."

"The heart, *Mütterchen*?"

"No, the cat; and come quickly or we lose our train."

They took the elevated, and transferred to one of the down-town theatres, where only the stage entrance showed any signs of life.

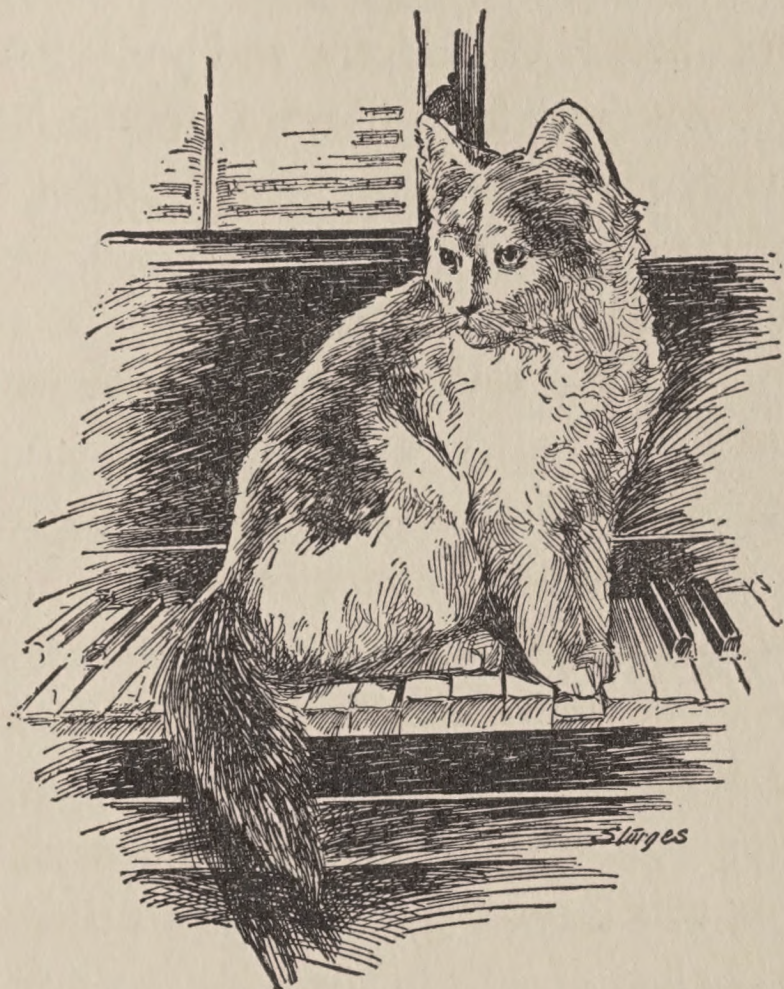
"Here comes little Arbutus," said a kind-looking woman, with painted cheeks. And a man with funny wrinkles around his eyes offered a stick of candy, saying, "Here's a twinkle for the star."

"What have you got there?" asked the property man, as little Arbutus unfastened her cloak. "An understudy?"

"No, a leading lady," said the child. "Only she's dreadfully hungry."

LITTLE ARBUTUS

“That proves she belongs to the profession,” said the low comedian, laughing. “I’ll give her



A LEADING LADY

one of my sandwiches.” Which he proceeded to do, although it was very doubtful whether he did not need it more himself.

“Good-bye, Elsa,” said the mother of little

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

Arbutus. "Be a good girl, and at eleven o'clock I come for you."

"Oh, mother! take good care of kitty."

"She shall have sausage and milk — never fear!" And the kind-hearted woman hurried off, carrying Pandora, who would have much preferred to stay with little Arbutus, and see why pink stockings should make one a queen.

But when she smelled the delicatessen shop that Mrs. Arbutus kept, her nose moved eagerly, and she leaped to the marble counter where stood bowls of pickles, slabs of boiled tongue, and fish swimming in luscious pans of oil.

"*Nein!* thou shalt have sausage, for so I told the child," said the woman. And when Pandora had feasted she was carried upstairs to lie on the bed of a little boy who was not lame, like the one in the park, but seemed to be recovering from an illness.

"Good evening," she purred in German, rubbing her nose against his cheek. But he did not notice anything unusual about the purr,

LITTLE ARBUTUS

and only smiled at her in the language that every one understands.

“*Ach, mein Liebchen*, thou hast been so long alone!” said his mother. “But it could not be otherwise, since Frieda could not stop for Elsa to-night.”

“What a beautiful little cat, mother. Is this my cat?”

“Thine and thy Elsa’s; she would have it so. It was homeless and crying in the park.”

“I am glad,” said little Fritz. “She will talk to me while you work in the shop.”

Just then a customer came in, and Frau Wursträuber hurried downstairs to sell some pot cheese and herrings. When she returned she bandaged Pandora’s paw so that the swelling felt much better; and little Fritz went to sleep with the kitten purring on his shoulder.

He did not know when his mother stole out to go down after Elsa, but he heard them come in, and sat up in bed, asking, “Oh, sister, did they clap to-night? Did they call you before the curtain, and did you make a little bow?”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“They called her three times,” said the mother, proudly. “She was a great success, and the manager has engaged her to be child in his new play — ‘Snowed-In’ — which they rehearse to-morrow. And look what she brings you !”

Little Arbutus ran forward with her arms full of beautiful roses which she laid on Fritz’s bed. “They are for thee,” she said.

“You did n’t take the hard-earned money to buy them?” asked the boy in distress.

“No, they were brought to me with a lady’s card, and something written on it that was so sweet and sad. Listen; it says: ‘For the little girl who looks like a little girl who was once my own.’ Does that mean that she died, mamma?”

“God knows,” said Elsa’s mother. “But it means that she wished to give you happiness.”

The two children were soon asleep. Fritz was used to waking when Elsa came home, to ask if she had made a little bow. And Elsa was as sweetly weary as a real flower fairy, who

LITTLE ARBUTUS

curls inside a rose, instead of a bed in a dark little flat, where the elevated trains rush past from morning till night.

But early the next day she was down in the shop helping her mother tie up packages, and ladle out milk for the people who came with little pails. Pandora was allowed to help too, although her ideas of helping were rather strange, and sometimes led her to jump into the scales while things were being weighed, or dip her paw in the bowls of little fish floating in brine.

"Now you must be Elsa till I come back," said the child, kissing Pandora's nose. "I'm going to rehearse the new play." And when she returned it was past noon.

"Mother!" she cried, running in joyfully, "the play is beautiful! It is on an old farm, and there is a grandpa and a grandma, and I am the only little girl. My mother was a lady dancer who ran away from home,—and oh, mother! they say they want a cat! I told them about this one, and they said if she turned out

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to be a good actress they 'd pay us a dollar a week more."

"Splendid! fine! She will make good money for us," said Mrs. Wursträuber, in delight.

"Look, my child, the paw is almost well."

And so Pandora entered upon her career as a "leading lady."

LITTLE JOHN

CHAPTER TWELVE

LITTLE JOHN

“**I** S N’T it time to go yet, Winnie?” asked John for the fifteenth time that morning. And Winnie answered patiently, “No, Master John. Mr. O’Rafferty said the horses don’t be coming out before twelve.”

“But I want to see Candy first, and take him an apple.”

“Oh, well, then, we might be starting along. I’ll ring for Donald.” And presently John’s chair was wheeled into the elevator, and he was carried down where his own little victoria was waiting, with Donald and the bay horse who took him to ride every day.

“You’re a fat horse, Edward,” he said. “You’re not a hero like Candy. You’re only a common fat horse.”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Shure, we can’t all be heroes,” said Winnie, warmly. “Is n’t it some credit to any of us if we go where we’re drove?”

Winnie was John’s old nurse who had been with him from babyhood, and so kind-hearted that she did not like to hear even a horse called fat. The maid whose carelessness had nearly cost John his life had been discharged.

“Yes, some of us don’t go where we’re driven, do we?” said John. “We just lie down and snore.”

“Here’s Mr. Candy’s hotel,” said Winnie, as the carriage stopped at the horse-doctor’s house.

“And there’s Brian coming out. He’s been to see him too,” said John, in delight.

“’Deed and I have,” said Brian, beaming as he lifted John from his seat. “Candy’s leg’s so well that he nearly kicked me with it. Yes, sir! You got a cheap horse on that deal, Master John.”

“I’m going to ride him in the country,” said John, as Brian carried him to the stable. “Papa’s having a special saddle made.”

LITTLE JOHN

Candy whinnied a welcome as he recognized his friends, but refused to eat the apple that John had brought.

“Have n’t you anything sweet with you?” asked Brian, shamefacedly. “You see we boys have kind of spoiled him.”

“There’s a candy store across the street,” said John to Winnie. “What kind does he like best, Brian?”

“Well, I don’t know. About how much do you want to spend?”

“I have n’t but ten cents with me, Master John,” said Winnie.

“Well, if you want to go in for that amount, I should say five cents’ worth of caramels, mostly chocolate, and some peanut sticks and jaw-breakers — cinnamon preferred.”

“No chewing gum?” asked John, seriously, as Winnie departed.

“No; it would n’t look well when you’re riding him. A horse that chews gives the impression of bein’ awful careless.”

When Winnie returned Candy ate the jaw-

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

breakers with great crunches and explosions, very different from the sucking process for which they were intended, and waited with pointed ears while the paper was taken from the caramels.

"The Vet says he'll be able to travel to-morrow," said Brian.

"It's meself that doubts it," said Winnie, decidedly. "Not after atin' all that stuff."

"Well, we'd better run around to the truck-house now," said Brian. "There's other horses and their friends waiting to see you."

"You must ride in the carriage, Brian."

"Thank you, Master John. I'll jump up here on the box."

"No, you must sit with us. You can hold me just as you're doing now. I read about you in the paper, Brian, and how you rescued a parrot and two cats, and were a hero."

"He's great on findin' heroes," said Winnie, as Brian burst out laughing.

"Well, there's one kind he seems to have overlooked," said Brian, patting the child's

LITTLE JOHN

hand. "And that's the sort that bears all sorts of pain and says nothing about it."

"Why, what is there to say?" asked John, in surprise. "Pain isn't interesting. And besides, I'm used to it."

When they reached the truck-house the whole company ran out to shake hands with the new arrivals, and then disappeared upstairs, so that when the bell rang there were ever so many legs to come sliding down. Some of them even put in an extra wave or two on John's account; and when the three splendid horses came trotting out, he was so pleased that he shouted and dug his heels into Brian's stomach until he howled for mercy.

"You are all heroes!" he exclaimed. "Look in here, you great fat Edward, and see these three hero horses and be ashamed of your fat ordinary brains!"

"That's the new horse, beside Abraham," said Henry. "He isn't quite broken in yet."

"Oh, have you found your kitten?" asked John.

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"No, she has n't turned up and we're going to get a new one. Abraham sleeps so cold we have to put an extra blanket on him."

"Do come up and see me — all of you, and spend the night," said John, earnestly, when Winnie insisted that it was time to go. "Bring the horses and the new cat. The horses could sleep with me. I've got a big bed." And all the firemen crowded around again to shake hands with the smallest of the heroes, as he drove away.

"Professor Van Camp is here to luncheon, sir," said the butler, when John reached home. "Your father said you were to come right in."

"Oh, hurray! Put me in my chair quick. Are they at table?" asked John, eagerly, for Professor Van Camp was his dearest chum.

"Hello, old man," said the Professor, rising, as the little chair was wheeled into the room. "It's an age since we've met."

"Hello, Harold," said John, holding out his hand. "The time has dragged heavily for me as well."

LITTLE JOHN

Both men laughed, and Mr. Homer said, "It's a pity that he can't play more with other children."

"Besides me, you mean," said the Professor, with a wink. And John chuckled at the memory of certain games invented, and beautiful loud noises complained of by the people below.

"There's a kid in our house that you ought to know," said the Professor, thoughtfully. "His name's Gideon, and he reminds me of you."

"Is he lame too?" asked John.

"No, but he doesn't get much more fun than if he was. He lives with a stiff, adopted aunt, who won't let him do anything he wants to. Of course she's a noble woman, but not the kind for children to live with."

"I wonder why she adopted him," said Mr. Homer.

"Nobody has ever dared ask, but it couldn't possibly have been because she wanted him."

"Why is he like me?" asked John.

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“ Because he thinks things out for himself, and has his own ideas, instead of borrowing other people’s. That’s what makes you different from most boys, John — not because you’re lame.”

“ Can’t Gideon come and spend a day with John soon? Or would the aunt interfere? ”

“ She would n’t be likely to consent, but I have another plan.”

“ What is it? ” asked John, looking disappointed.

“ Gideon and I are going down town to buy Christmas presents one afternoon next week.”

“ That’ll be nice for Gideon,” said John, in rather a small voice.

“ And I want Daddy to let you come with us.”

“ Oh, how could I? Would you wheel me? ” asked John, eagerly.

“ We would take the chair down to one of the big department stores, where they have a Santa Claus and a concert and ice-cream. Were you ever in one? ”

LITTLE JOHN

"No, never, never! Winnie and Edward and I drive down to Schwartz's and buy our toys and then we come home. Nothing ever happens. Oh, Harold! could we perhaps go to the place where they say, 'Meet me at the fountain'?"

"We'll do the whole show."

"Say, Van Camp, that'll be too much trouble for you," said Mr. Homer. "How can you wheel that chair through the Christmas crowds?"

"Just the way I'd wheel it anywhere else. Gideon will go ahead and kick the shins of people who get in our way."

"You're a brick!" exclaimed Mr. Homer, warmly. And John said, "No, he's the whole wall."

So on the appointed day, Gideon and Harold and John drove down town behind the fat Edward, with John's chair up in front beside Donald, and stopped at the place where they meet you at the fountain.

"I've got seventy-four cents," said Gideon, quite hoarse with excitement, "and I have n't

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many folks to buy presents for, so I ought to get something handsome for 'em all."

Fifty cents of this was what Annabel had given him for Hominy, and the rest he had earned.

"I have n't many people, either," said John, in wonder, remembering the fifty dollars that his father had given him to spend. "Only Papa, and Winnie, and the other servants, and —" here he whispered loudly in Gideon's ear — "Harold. I always send things to the hospital children too, because they like them, and it's fun to pick them out."

"Here we go," said Gideon, holding open the door, and John's chair was pushed into what seemed to him a city of shop counters and Christmas greens. "Oh, look at the silver things, and the handkerchiefs with the lions' heads on 'em, and the holly candy boxes!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, that's nothing," said Gideon, grandly, pretending not to be impressed. "Wait till you see the fountain."

LITTLE JOHN

"Have you seen it?" asked John, in awed tones.

"Well, no," admitted Gideon, reluctantly. "I ain't, but I'm goin' to."

"Who do we meet at the fountain?" asked John, as his chair took a triumphant course past the cotillon favors, to the collars.

"Nobody that we know, I'm afraid," said the Professor. "Look, boys! Are n't those bully neckties for eight cents?"

"Do you really like them?" asked Gideon, eagerly. "What's your favorite color, Mr. Harold?"

"I think that pink one with the purple roses," he said, laughing. But noticing the meaning look that passed between the boys, he added hastily, "No, I prefer the plain dark red."

"The claret-colored," whispered John to Gideon.

"What's claret?" asked Gideon. "Is it a kind of dog?"

"No, it's a kind of wine," said John, in

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astonishment. "Does n't your aunt drink wine when she's sick?"

"No, she just sits and hollers. I'll sneak back and get the tie now, shall I?"

"I'll invert his mind," said John. "Oh, Harold! see that mirror with the painted spinach on it!"

"Beautiful!" said the Professor.

"And the man that draws a lady's picture on her own necktie for a nickel! Three for a dime!"

"Wonderful!" said Harold.

"I just went back to look at something," said Gideon, carelessly, rejoining them. "There's a fine display of visiting cards."

"Yes, there's lots to see," said Harold. "Whom are you going to buy presents for, Gideon? — when it comes time to buy them, I mean."

And John whispered proudly in Gideon's ear, "He does n't suspect!"

"I thought of a turn-over collar for Miss Annabel, worked in four-leaved clovers. It'll

LITTLE JOHN

remind her of Hominy. They cost a quarter."

"A fine idea," said the Professor. "Clovers are so much more graceful, embroidered, than cabbages. Don't you think so?"

"Oh, see the big statue of Liberty!" said John, "wading in a pond."

"That's the fountain," said Harold.

"And lots of people eating ice-cream," said Gideon. "Oh, Mr. Harold! that's what 'liberty' means."

"We have n't got liberty yet, have we?" suggested John.

"No, but we can smell it," said Gideon, gazing as if he never intended to move again.

"I want some ice-cream," said the Professor suddenly, as if the idea had just struck him.

"What kind do you think you'll have?" asked Gideon, respectfully.

"Well, I shall want at least three saucers, and you can say what the first shall be."

"Chocolate and vanilla," said Gideon, with a widening smile.

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“And the second one, John?”

“Strawberry and moustache.”

“Pistache, John, and strawberry ’ll make you sick.”

“Ten cents pays for the round trip, even if it does,” said Gideon, placidly.

The ice-cream arrived in little cones of inviting sweetness, and John said, “I’m going to eat the top off mine first — are you?”

“No, I’m going to scoop mine out underneath till it caves in, smash! and then I can begin all over again.”

“Oh, what a *pretty* little girl!” said John, stopping, with his spoon in the air.

“Why, I know her,” said Gideon, turning very red. “It’s Eunice Wood, who came to the party, and that’s her brother Kenneth with her. He likes rabbits. I’m goin’ to speak to ’em — no I ain’t. They won’t remember me.”

“I’ll speak to them,” said the Professor, rising. But at that minute Kenneth broke away from his mother, and, running towards them, called, “Hello, Gid!”

LITTLE JOHN

"Hello, Kenneth! Hello, Eunice!" said the Professor. "How do you do, Mrs. Wood? I suppose this means Christmas shopping."

"I should say it did," said Mrs. Wood, shaking hands. "And the worst of it is that the children are buying my present. They make me stand with my back turned most of the time, and then keep asking me how much they ought to spend on me."

"Come shopping with us," said the Professor, cordially. "We're off on a lark. This is little John Homer. I want you to know him, all of you. He's our kind."

"I'm delighted to know John," said Mrs. Wood, shaking hands again, "and Gideon too. Eunice has told me about him."

"Won't you have some ice-cream?" asked the Professor.

"I was just wondering how long it would be before you thought of it," sighed Kenneth, in relief.

"For shame, Kenny!" said his mother, but

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as she caught the Professor's eye they both laughed.

"Let's move to this larger table," he said. "Now I'll give you a conundrum to guess. What's better on a shopping tour than three little boys?"

"Four little boys," said Kenneth, blissfully.

"No, one little girl," he said, laying his hand on Eunice's hair. And looking up brightly, she added, "So now the only thing that we really need to make the party complete is a cat!"

THE PERFUMERY GARDEN

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE PERFUMERY GARDEN

“**T**HIS side up!” called the elevator man, as John’s chair was wheeled into the big cage.

“This side up! Well, I should say so,” said Gideon, finding Eunice a seat. “Did he expect us to stand on our heads?”

“Books, ladies’ underwear, photographic supplies, house-furnishings, toys —”

“You can stop right here,” said Gideon, as the elevator man went on repeating his piece. “It’s toys we’re after.”

“Let ’em out, please. Goin’ up!” said the man, as the boys cleared a space for John’s chair through the crowd.

“Toys? This way, madam.” And the floor-walker pointed to a dazzling corner from which came the sound of puffing engines, squealing lambs, and music-boxes, varied by gurgles,

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laughter, and an occasional wail from somebody whose nap-time had come.

"There's a wind-up rabbit. See it hop!" exclaimed Gideon, in delight. And Kenneth whispered to his mother, "Can't we buy it for him? His aunt won't let him keep live ones."

"No, but wind-up hops cost ever so much more than real ones, Kenny dear. He wouldn't want any one to spend two dollars on just a baby's toy."

"Isn't that funny!" said Kenneth. "You know, mother, in a live rabbit the hop is the cheapest part. It's just thrown in with the rest without extra charge. It doesn't make it cost too much to buy, like long fur or fancy ears."

Eunice led Gideon to a pile of toy kitchens, saying: "Aren't these sweet? You could make a real fire in 'em if your mother'd let you."

"I don't care much for cooking," he confessed. But when John, in response to a

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prodigious wink, had called Eunice away, Gideon bought and smuggled one of those kitchens under his coat — for the price, oh, joy to tell it! was only fifteen cents.

“ Turnips ! I did n’t know frying pans were so sharp ! ” he exclaimed to himself, as the little tin dishes chafed his ribs.

“ Won’t you help me pick out some dolls for the hospital children ? ” John asked Eunice. “ And see that their — their clothes, you know, are nice.”

The clerk laid out a row of sweet-faced dollies, and Eunice lifted their accordion pleated skirts to see if the little underclothes were all properly trimmed. “ Lace on every one,” she said, drawing a long breath. “ Are you really going to buy some of these ? ”

“ I ’m going to buy them all,” he said, taking out his purse. And Eunice gasped, for there were twenty dollies, and, having such nice clothes, the price was a dollar and a quarter apiece.

“ It makes me almost wish I were a hospital

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child," she thought. "Not the broken-legged kind, but something short, like croup. 'T would be worth having croup, or even measles, to get one of these dollies."

"Now I want one more," said John. "The very prettiest doll that you have. It's for a friend of my own."

"Will you just step this way?" asked the clerk, and Eunice herself wheeled John's chair over to a separate show-case, where, standing alone with outstretched hands, stood a big, big dolly the size of a two-year-old child, but more beautiful than any child Eunice had ever seen.

"See her brown eyes and her spireal curls!" she cried, "and her fluffy dress with the embroidered guimpe, and her darling starched bonnet."

"A very nice doll, my little lady," said the man. "It's a Parisian model."

"Oh, no," said Eunice. "I think it must be a stuffed truly little girl. And such a nice, particular looking dress. Her father and mother must have been ladies."

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"I'll take that one, please," said little John.

"You have n't asked the price," suggested the clerk, with a smile.

"Well, I won't pay for it now. You can have it charged to papa. He said I might do that if the money gave out."

"Who is papa?" asked the clerk, uncertainly.
"Shall we send it C. O. D.?"

"Mr. John B. Homer is papa," said John, Jr., "and we live—"

"Pardon me, but we know the address. Is there anything else we can show you to-day?"

"Not to-day, I think, thank you." And Eunice cast adoring looks after the beautiful doll, who gazed back at her with soft eyes.

"Oh, how happy that little girl will be!" she sighed; and John smiled wisely to himself, as one who does not tell all that he knows.

After this there was a great deal of deception, and getting people to look the other way while packages were hurried out of sight; and then they all went to another end of the store, where a big Santa Claus was wagging his head regularly

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

to the tune of "Teasing, teasing, I was only teasing you." The singing really came from a phonograph in Santa's stomach, but it sounded exactly as if it fell out of his mouth.

"I've got Grandma's present at last," said Kenneth, returning from a brief excursion. "It's an ash-tray. Don't you think she'll like it?"

"Grandma does n't smoke," said Eunice, disapprovingly.

"No, but she can use it to keep pins in, can't she?" he asked in such a warlike tone that Eunice subsided. And Gideon said, "Those two little raised gilt guinea-pigs in the middle are awful handsome, are n't they?"

"I thought so," said Kenneth, still casting hostile glances at Eunice, "but some people have n't any taste."

"I smell something lovely," said John, changing the subject. "There's a little girl putting perfumery on a lady's handkerchief."

"What lots of big bottles!" said Eunice. "She fills the little bottles out of them, and

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then puts them in boxes tied up with ribbon — see ! ”

“ I want to smell too,” said Kenneth, making his way to the show-case. “ Say, little girl, how much is it for a smell of all those bottles ? ”

“ Nothing at all. Jump up here on my stool,” she said with a smile. And Kenneth blew steaming breaths into each bottle by turn until his mother plucked him down.

“ Me next,” said Eunice, scrambling up in his place.

“ I want to smell of two at a time,” said John, “ and see which side of my nose is loudest.”

“ How can you tell ? ” asked the Professor, laughing, as two small bottles were handed down.

“ Why,” said John, “ the best side of my nose will come out ahead.” And after two or three long sniffs he called out, “ Violet ! ”

“ That ’s on the left side,” said the girl. “ The other one was rose.”

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"Then my left nose wins," said John, seriously. "It's a pity we didn't bet on it."

"It smells just like a garden here, doesn't it?" said Eunice.

"I call it my garden," said the little sales-girl. "Papa and mamma came from England, and had a garden there, but I've never seen one, so I pretend that this is mine. You see we have so many different kinds of perfume that when I shut my eyes I can imagine they are all growing. And sometimes the pictures come on the outside of the bottles, so I can tell what the flowers look like, too."

"Violets, and roses, and lilies of the valley," read Eunice from the labels, "and musk and carnation and Jockey Club. What kind of a flower is a Jockey Club?"

"Oh, not a flower at all. Mother says it's just a name. But I think it smells like a whole big bouquet."

"Is the musk made of muskrats?" asked Kenneth. "It doesn't smell like a white rat."

"Let's look up the musk-ox when we go

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home," said the Professor, laughing. "And meanwhile I'll get some white lilac for Annabel."

While the salesgirl was putting up a dainty bottle with a little spray of the lilac on it, the Professor asked where she lived, and if there were other children in the family.

"There are four of us now," she said, "but the others are n't old enough to work yet."

"And do you think you're old enough to work all day?"

"I'm thirteen," she said proudly; "and the work is n't very hard — except in hot weather, of course. And even then," she added with a smile, "you see I'm working in a garden."

Little John had been listening eagerly while they talked, and when they had all said good-bye, and thanked the child for her kindness, he whispered in the Professor's ear.

"Let's!" said Harold, in delight. "She told me where she lived." So they went down to the main floor, where a man was selling potted plants, and ordered a geranium and

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some hyacinths and ferns to be sent to the little girl who had never seen a real garden.

"Won't she be surprised!" cried the children, in delight; and the flower man said, "I just guess she will. That address you gave me is in one of the poorest districts in New York. There ain't too many flowers growin' there."

"I'm afraid we must be going now," said Mrs. Wood, reluctantly. "But this has been the nicest shopping trip we ever had. Has n't it, children?"

"Oh, mother! don't go," they cried. "Let's meet again at the fountain."

"I wish you'd come home with me instead," said John, as Eunice slipped her hand into his. "We need a little sister at our house."

But the little sister's mother had to catch a train, so the two new friends were hurried away lamenting, while John was reassured with promises of another and a longer meeting.

"Nice kids, those," said Gideon, mournfully, as he watched them depart.

"Nice kids, these, too," said Harold, patting

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his shoulder ; and Gideon looked up with a smile.

“ I want to get something for Kenneth,” said John, decidedly.

“ Is that quite necessary ? ” asked the Professor. “ You ’ve only just met him, you know.”

“ Well, I have n’t any old friends, and just because a friend ’s new it does n’t make him any the less your friend, does it ? ”

“ Not if you like him a lot. What are you thinking of buying ? ”

“ A white rabbit, I guess. He says he ’s out of white rabbits.”

“ There ’s an animal department upstairs,” said Gideon, his eyes fairly standing out with excitement. “ If you feel tired or anything, I might go up and select it for you.”

“ Just what I was going to ask,” said John, cannily. “ If it would n’t trouble you too much.”

Gideon was darting away when John called him back to give him some money.

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"Oh, it won't cost two dollars," Gideon said. "You can get a real good rabbit for half that."

"Well, go along and pick it out," said John. And the minute that Gideon disappeared he turned to Harold, asking, "Now, what'll we buy for *him*?"

"Seems to me we're pretty reckless to-day, aren't we?" asked his companion.

"Dad said I might," said John, with shining eyes. "What would Gideon like? I ordered one of those toy rabbits for a joke, but of course that does n't count."

"Well, I think some nice books and a little shelf to put them on. Gideon's a great reader."

So they went to the book department and ordered a little "Encyclopedia of Common Things," "Tanglewood Tales," Bulfinch's "Age of Fable," and some "first rate" Indian and sea stories. And as they returned to the starting place, they found Gideon looking for them with a white Angora rabbit in his arms.

THE PERFUMERY GARDEN

“It costs two and a half,” he said breathlessly. “But I thought I’d just let you look



“‘OH, THEY DO NOTHING BUT HOP,’ HE SAID WEARILY”

at it. The man said I might. There are others, black ones, for seventy-five cents.”

“That one’ll do,” said John, handing out another half dollar; and Gideon gasped, think-

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ing what a thing it was to go shopping with a prince to whom cost was nothing. But he remembered having once read a story called "The Little Lamé Prince," that was very sad indeed; so perhaps money was not of much use, after all, to one who could not walk.

"Why would n't you like a rabbit yourself?" asked the Professor, suddenly, as Gideon placed Kenneth's present on John's knee.

"Oh, they do nothing but hop," he said wearily. "And they won't play with a fellow. I haven't seen anything I really wanted to-day, except a little sister like Eunice Wood."

When he reached home that afternoon his father asked: "Well, what was the nicest thing that happened?"

"I made three new friends," said John, sitting gravely on his knee.

"And which did you like the best?"

"They were all pleasant," he answered with dignity. "'Specially Gideon."

But after dinner when Mr. Homer went to

THE PERFUMERY GARDEN

John's room, he was astonished to see a life-size baby doll, fluffy and triumphant, sitting in the middle of the table.

"Now does n't that look as if there was a little sister in this house?" asked John, with pride. "If you did n't know, would n't you be likely to think, 'Well, J. B. Homer must have two children, a boy and a girl'?"

"I certainly should," said his father, both puzzled and amused. "But where's this child's mother?"

"She lives in Montrose," said John, sadly, "but just now I'm pretending that she lives here." And he glanced affectionately at a Christmas card with a kitty's head on it, which bore the words, "To Eunice Wood, from her true new friend, J. B. Homer, Jr."

"The society of other children,—that's what the poor little chap needed," thought his father, as he went back to his study. "Harold knew."

That night he tiptoed in as usual to look at John while he slept; and there beside the bed,

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with her white dress carefully spread out around her, sat the beautiful doll, her yellow curls gleaming in the dim light from the half-open door, her eyes smiling on John as lovingly as those of the little sister in his dream.

BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS

“**Q**UARTER past one!” called little Arbutus, doing up the last package of cream cheese in tin foil. “Fritz, is Baby on your bed?”

“Already,” he answered. “I hope she brings home more flowers to-day.”

Elsa danced in to kiss him and put Pandora in the little basket that was her private coupé to and from the theatre. Then Frieda, one of the “walking ladies,” came for them, and they hurried to the elevated station.

“There ’ll be a full house to-day; you see if there is n’t,” said Elsa, “because it’s the last matinée before Christmas.”

“That’s just the reason why there won’t be,” said Frieda. “Christmas week is the worst of the season for theatres.” But it seemed that a great many people must have done their

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shopping early this year, for the house and most of the boxes were filled.

“There’s lots of kids in the audience to-day,” said the stage manager, coming back from a peep-hole in the curtain. “That’s Elsa’s doing, and Baby’s.”

“Baby,” as Pandora was now called, had been trained for her part in the simplest way possible. Just before it was time for her to go on, her basket was placed by a window, so that her little toes grew chilly enough to enjoy a warm place when it was found; and when Grandpa, in the old kitchen scene, asked, “Snowbird, where’s your kitten?” she was allowed to run in before the audience, and, seeing a fire blazing on the hearth, made straight for it, just as a kitten does in her own home.

“Is n’t that cunning! see it curl up its paws,” people whispered. “She acts just as if she’d been out in the snow.”

And presently she and Elsa — whose name in the play was “Snowbird” — had a fine game

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on the rug with a string of spools, while the older people talked about her mother, the dancer, who had run away. In the second act Pandora was not to appear, so some of the walking ladies carried her off to their dressing-room, without heeding the rule that when not acting she should be kept in her basket.

"Let's make her up," said one of the actresses, seizing a "hare's foot." "Come, Baby, let me darken your eyebrows and rouge your pretty nose."

"That's pink enough already," objected some one else. "Don't make her look too bold."

"Oh, the footlights make everybody look pale. Hold her still, Maggie."

So they drew black rings around Pandora's eyes, and deepened the color of her nose until it had quite a startling effect. Then they drew wrinkles in her white cheeks and let her go, laughing very hard at the funny circus-lady effect that she gave.

"Take it off before she goes into her basket,

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Maggie," pleaded the other girl. "We'll get into trouble."

But before they could remove the "make-up," the call-boy came in, saying, "Josh Peters' speech is cut out. You come on next. Take your cue from Grandma, 'Have you seen Ellen?'"

And in a terrible flurry the walking ladies ran out of the dressing-room, leaving Pandora free to wander behind the scenes at will. She was especially fond of walking along the "grid-iron," the place over the stage where drop-scenes are kept, ready to be let down when needed. And to-day she could look straight down on the stage, where poor Grandma, in her best Sunday clothes, was pleading with the runaway dancer to come home. "Remember your child," she was saying. "Think of your motherless little one!" when suddenly a kitten dropped down from what appeared to be the sky over a crowded city street, and landed on Grandma's shoulder.

The leading lady choked with something

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besides grief, and a man in the gallery called out, "See, you don't have to go home now. Your little one's come to you!"



"TURNED HER FANTASTIC LITTLE FACE TO THE AUDIENCE"

"Did they mean that? Was that part of the play?" people were asking. But Grandma went right on with her speech, so presently the laughter stopped. It began again when Pan-

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dora sauntered to the front of the stage, and turned her fantastic little face to the audience.

"That nose ain't genuine. She paints," said an old lady, in such a loud whisper that everybody laughed harder than ever, and the actors were thankful when the curtain fell.

"Who let out that wretched little cat?" asked the manager, raging around through the dressing-rooms. But nobody seemed to know, and everybody was just as innocent of any knowledge concerning the painted nose.

"I can get it off with cold cream," said Elsa. So in a few minutes Baby was presentable again.

In the next act the daughter comes back to the farm in disguise to see her child, and finds Snowbird playing in the woods with her kitten. Of course Pandora did this part very well, as it does not require any rehearsal to scramble up and down a painted tree, and claw the leaves from imitation plants. Snowbird had only to wiggle anything in sight, to make the kitten pounce.

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“ Oh, is n't she sweet ! is n't she cunning ! ” came in childish whispers of delight from all over the house ; and Baby flirted her tail higher than ever, for what actress does not like applause ?

Meanwhile the lady dancer was asking all about Grandpa and Grandma, and Snowbird was telling her that to-morrow there would be a May party, and she was to be the queen. This May dance was brought in especially for Elsa, as she had made such a “ hit ” as “ Queen of the Arbutus ” in the other play, and would wear the same costume.

So when the May dance was given, and Pandora actually sat on top of the Maypole with a wreath of arbutus about her neck, while the children danced around her, the house went quite wild with delight. And as this is also the scene where the daughter is forgiven and comes home to stay, why — “ everybody lives happily ever after.” But the house was n't half so much interested in the forgiven lady dancer, who was also the leading lady, as it

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was in the little girl and her kitten. And at the end of the play there were loud calls for "Snowbird!" and "Baby!"

When little Arbutus went before the curtain, with the pink Mayflowers wreathed in her dress and hair, she looked so sweet that an old man handed up a basket of roses which had been brought for the leading lady. Then as the applause grew louder Baby came trotting out to see what it was all about. And you can imagine how the children laughed, and stamped, and refused to go home while that alluring little tail still waved its thanks.

As Elsa bowed to right and left she saw a little lame boy in one of the boxes, watching her with eagerness and smiling at Baby, and when she turned to leave the stage a small bunch of half-wilted violets fell at her feet. It was little John's boutonnière which he had offered, rather than give nothing at all, for the performance of Baby had pleased him more than anything that he had ever seen, and he thought



“That alluring little tail still waved its thanks.” *Page 182.*

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little Snowbird just as wonderful for a girl as Baby was for a cat.

"Did you see her bow to me?" he asked Winnie, in an excited whisper. "She bowed just as low as she did for the man who gave her the roses. It was a beautiful bow."

"'T was a pity Master Gideon could n't have come with us," said Winnie. And John put his hand sadly in the pocket which held Gideon's letter, saying:

"DEAR JOHN: Aunt thinks theatres are wicked. I don't myself. I think some things are wicked. But I can't go to-day. I thank you for asking me.

"Your true friend,

"GIDEON."

"I think," said John, seriously, and after much meditation, "that it would be better if he had n't that aunt."

"That's naughty, Master John," said Winnie, "to speak so."

"Well, I won't mention it again," he said, "but my opinion remains the same."

"Papa," he said at dinner that night, "I've

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met the nicest girl that I've seen in two days, and the best cat that I've met since I was born."

"Where is it?" asked his father, with interest, thinking of Christmas.

"It won't do any good," said John. "I want it awfully, but it belongs to the theatre company."

"Oh, yes, the trick cat at the Momus! Well, perhaps the company would sell it. Isn't there anything else you want in your stocking besides that?"

"Not a thing, I'm afraid," said John. "And I really don't need the stocking. You know I don't wear them out very fast."

The sight of those dancing children had reminded him of the fact that Maypoles and May dances were not for him — no, never, as long as he should live; and forgetting that his father was watching him he gave a little sigh.

"I'll offer them a hundred dollars for the cat," thought Mr. Homer, at his wits' end; for

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nothing seemed to him so dreadful as that a little boy should not want a great many things for Christmas.

“May I send Arbutus some candy?” John asked, and his father’s face brightened as he answered: “Of course you can! We’ll go to Huyler’s to-morrow.”

When his note reached the theatre the company were in the middle of a rehearsal, and the manager read it aloud very crossly, adding: “Well, of all the cheeky propositions that I ever struck! J. B. Homer wants to buy Baby for his lame son — right in the middle of the season, with a good road business before us.”

Everybody laughed but little Arbutus, who remembered the lame boy, and how wistful his eyes had been.

“I guess you’re thinking that Baby belongs to you, aren’t you, Elsa?” he asked, patting the little girl’s shoulder. “Well, don’t be scared. I’ll write him that Baby is n’t mine to sell. That’s true enough, for you picked her

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up. Now, Miss Edsley, this is the table, left, and you come forward, centre."

The rehearsal went on, but instead of being frightened at the suggestion of losing Baby, as the manager thought, Elsa was wondering how it would feel not to be able to dance and play with other children — not to play "Tag," or "Prisoners' Base," or "Blindman's Buff," and to sit all day in a chair.

"I think," she decided suddenly, "that I'll send him Baby for a Christmas gift."

At first she thought that she would ask the manager. Then she remembered that he had said Baby was not his to sell, so of course he could make no objections if her owner chose to give her away. It did not occur to her that though he had said Baby was not his to sell he might imagine that she was his to keep.

"We can find another kitten," said Mrs. Wursträuber, when Elsa told her about it; "another, even so pretty as this one, and she can go with you on the road travel."

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“ I shall miss the little cat,” said Fritz. “ But then I shall soon be well again, and this little boy cannot walk.”

So on Christmas morning the Homers' door-bell rang, and the butler brought in a covered basket, saying, “ A little girl left it for Master John, but she would n't come in, sir. She seemed afraid.”

“ A strange little girl ? ” asked John. “ Why, I don't know any strange little girls. What can this be ? ”

“ E-ow ! ” said Pandora, as the cover slipped off the basket, and, recognizing John as one of the many friends who always await a nice little cat, jumped straight into his arms. A card tied to her neck said :

“ You wanted to buy my kitty, but she is not for sale. So I give her with much Christmas love. From

“ LITTLE ARBUTUS.

“ P. S. — The candy was very nice, and Fritz also eats it with joy.”

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“It’s Baby!” cried John. “But it was n’t the theatre people’s Baby — it was her Baby, and she has given it to me!”

“It was very sweet in the child,” said his father. “But we can’t accept so much from her, because she’s a poor little girl. I must pay her for the cat.”

“Oh, no, Daddy. People don’t pay for Christmas gifts. It’s not polite. But we must go see her, and find out who Fritz is, and what else we can do to give little Arbutus joy.” And as he said this, Baby looked up in his face and purred.

A LUNCHEON PARTY

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A LUNCHEON PARTY

“SOME more presents, sir,” said the butler, bringing in a handful of packages. “Come by mail.”

“Why, I don’t know anybody to send me things by mail,” said John, surprised again. But his father, as curious as he was, said, “Open them quick !”

The first was a toy telephone from the ten-cent store — they are really quite good — and a note from Gideon, saying, “This is to find out which one of your ears can smell the furthest. I bet on the left one.” And Mr. Homer laughed very hard when John explained the perfumery joke.

Another parcel held a pasteboard box punched full of holes and containing certain partitions, and little rooms made of green paper, with the following directions :

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“This is a grasshopper house. You get some one to catch the grasshoppers, and they do the rest. It will cheer you to see a grasshopper stick his whiskers through the holes. The green color makes them feel at home and matches their stomachs, all but the legs.

“KENNETH WOOD.”

“I’ll catch the grasshoppers next summer,” said Mr. Homer, trying not to smile, “and you can do the rest. What’s in the other parcel?”

This proved to be a framed picture of a little girl holding a cat, and looking just as unconscious of herself as any mother does when photographed with her baby. On the back of the picture was written, “My child, Weejums Wood, age, two years, three months, a day and twenty minutes. With a Merry Christmas to John.”

“That’s the mother of the big doll, now,” he said, showing his father the picture. “Don’t you s’pose she was awfully surprised when it came?”

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"She must have been fairly staggered," said his father. "But it's certain that you've made some pretty good friends."

"It's too bad that Harold and his sister are out of town," said John. "I would have liked to show them Baby."

"But you're glad they took Gideon with them, aren't you?"

"Yes, and they'll come to see me as soon as they get back."

"What do you say to an afternoon at the Hippodrome?"

"I do!" said John, beaming. And Christmas Day ended as beautifully as it had begun.

But that evening, after John was in bed, a tearful German woman called to see Mr. Homer, and said that she was the mother of little Arbutus.

"I am so grieved, so overcome to ask this," she almost sobbed, "but the manager says he will not take my little girl on the road trip if Baby is not returned. He says that Baby

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makes big money for him, and no other cat will do. So I must request that Baby should be given back to us. I would not ask it but that my son is ill, and we need much money for him, more than I can make in the shop."

"I was afraid there might be trouble about the cat," said Mr. Homer, thoughtfully. "But don't feel so badly about it. Perhaps we can think of a way. Do you want your little girl to remain on the stage?" he asked suddenly, after a moment of silence.

"*Ach, nein*, no indeed!" said poor Mrs. Wursträuber. "It makes very well in the city where she can spend her days with me and I know all that she does. But to let her go among strangers — that I do not like. Who knows what people she meets, or what talk she hears? No, Mr. Homer, these theatre friends are most kind, but my heart says that the place for a little *Mädchen* is by her mother's side."

"I quite agree with you," said Mr. Homer. "Have you signed the contract for this business yet?"

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"No, sir, the manager says she shall not sign till she returns the cat."

"Then I have a suggestion to make. Stop all this theatrical work for the child this winter, and I'll pay you the amount of her salary in return for the cat. I don't like to take it away from John. He's set his heart on having this particular one."

"*Ach*, sir, you are too good! We could not impose so much on your kindness, for we are not without money. It is only that I wished to send my little son to the country when warm weather comes. He is not well."

"I'll send him, and the little girl too, if you'll be kind enough to make this arrangement. The kindness will be all on your side, you know, in giving so much pleasure to my son. He is quite helpless, and little things mean so much to him. Let me write a check now, as a little Christmas gift from the kitten."

"Very well, sir," said Mrs. Wursträuber, after a little pause. "If it is a question of

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your son's health, and my son's health, I will take the money."

"Can't your little girl come and take luncheon with John at one o'clock to-morrow?" he asked as he handed her an envelope. "That would be a still greater kindness, for I can't be with him."

"I will tell her," said Elsa's mother, in delight. "The poor child did not know when the manager came, for she was away in search of another cat. And now she need never hear of my trouble. I will find some story to tell her."

"Would you like to see my boy?" he asked, as she rose to go; and he led her into another room where, curled up in bed, with Baby purring on his shoulder, lay little John, fast asleep.

"You see how ill he looks," his father said; and the kind-hearted woman's eyes filled again as they went back to the study.

"It is right that he keeps the kitten," she said, and, thanking Mr. Homer once more,

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went out into the night. A neighboring church tower sent a peal of chimes through the crisp air, and in every lighted window hung a Christmas wreath.

"God has heard my prayers," she said, as she turned towards home, "and the little maiden will not have to go from the nest."

When she told Elsa the good news they all laughed and cried together, for Fritz had been forlorn at the prospect of losing his sister, and as their mother took them both in her arms, the children sang the old proverb that is a German household word: "East or west, *Mutter ist best.*"

"But what shall I wear to-morrow?" Elsa asked, thinking of Mr. Homer's invitation. "I have no party gown."

"You have the dress of the May Queen," said her mother. "It would be fitting to wear it in such a beautiful house."

"And I will take my new cat to show him," said the child.

So the next day, as John sat waiting in his

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room, in tripped a spring-like little figure, wearing a low-necked frock wreathed with Mayflowers, and carrying a black kitten.

"Oh, how beautiful you look! just like the play and Snowbird," John cried. "Are you really Snowbird when you are at home?"

"*Nein*. I'm Elsa Wursträuber," was the shy reply. "And this is my new cat."

"How do you do, cat?" said John, politely. "I'm happy to meet you. But don't you miss your own kitten, Elsa? I feel so naughty to keep it."

"No, we are glad she should live here. Her ears are so fine that the noise of the trains made her suffer. She was not born to keep a shop."

Just then Pandora, who had heard Elsa's voice, ran to meet her with a welcoming mew.

"Oh, she remembers, — the treasure!" exclaimed the child, kissing her rapturously, while the neglected new kitten hid under John's chair.

A LUNCHEON PARTY

"What's the new one's name?" he asked, reaching down to pat it.

"Ink," said Elsa, briefly.

"But what do you call it when you want it to come?"

"Inky."

"Why, I know you!" said Pandora to Inky. "Don't you remember me?" For the black kitten was no other than the wicked "Purr-puss," who had sat for his picture and spit when he should have smiled.

"I had him from our German friend, the cobbler on Columbus Avenue," Elsa explained. "He owns the mother and sister also."

"Luncheon is served," said the butler at the door, and little Arbutus suddenly became very silent.

"Do we eat alone in this big room?" she whispered, as John's chair was wheeled to the head of the table.

"No, Baby and Inky can have their dinner too, 'cause it's my party," said John, wondering why she looked so alarmed.

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"Oh, what do I do with so many forks?" Elsa was thinking, as she glanced down at her plate.

The first course was bouillon, and the guest put sugar and cream in hers, thinking it was tea, but did not suffer from the mistake because it tasted no worse than some of the queer German soups mother made.

"*Wurst* means sausage, does n't it?" asked John, politely, to make conversation.

"Yes," said Elsa; then gazed bewildered at a strange castle of potatoes that was approaching, surrounded by a moat of peas.

"Pass it to me first," said John, quietly. And after that the luncheon went better, for all that Elsa needed was to see how things were done.

"I know a poem called 'The Sausage-Bird,'" continued John. "Mr. Harold wrote it. Would you like me to say it for you?"

"*Bitte*," said Elsa, prettily, so John began:

"O have you seen the Sausage-Bird
A-rooting in the boughs,
And chewing up the worsted-work
Of calm, distracted cows?"

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“O have you seen the Sausage-Bird ?

No, I have not, I swear ;

Then have you heard the Sausage-Bird ?

I have, but I don't care !

“And would you eat a Sausage-Bird ?

I could not if I tried,

Because it has no outer skin,

Nor anything inside.”

“That's very pretty,” said Elsa. “I did n't know there was poetry to our name.”

“Tell me about Baby and the theatre,” said John ; and Elsa's face cleared.

“Well, Baby was a bad cat. You know when stage people have to wear certain things they're fined if they forget them.”

“Like their clothes ?” John inquired.

“Oh, not so much as that, but what they call a 'property.' ”

“Houses,” said John, “and railroads ?”

“No, nothing so big. Something little, like a fan or a bouquet. The leading man always had to wear a bunch of violets in his button-hole, and one night Baby got into his dressing-

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room and chewed them up, so he did n't have any. Baby loves flowers."

"And what happened to the man?"

"He had to pay his fine just the same, because of course they could n't fine Baby."

"When else was Baby bad?" asked John.

"Well, one time in the first act she came capering on in a sad part where you were n't meant to laugh, and when they tried to shoo her out she put up her tail and went off, sideways, looking so saucy that the whole house roared. Just like Saturday, you know, when she fell off the gridiron."

"What a bad cat!" said John.

"Yes, and when it came time for Grandpa to ask, 'Snowbird, where's the kitten?' some one upstairs called out, 'Jiminy! where *ain't* the kitten?'"

"Tell some more," said John.

"What a nice croquette!" said Elsa, as a plate was put down before her. And John laughed when on tasting it she discovered that it was ice-cream coated with spices, and

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the peas rolling around it were made of candy.

"That's one of Blinks' surprises," said John, and Blinks, the butler, smiled in gratification, for he liked to have John pleased.

"But the baddest thing of all that Baby did was to spoil a flashlight picture of the play," said Elsa, capturing three of the "sweet" peas in her spoon.

"Go on," said John, with round eyes.

"We were all posing, you know, and 'most everybody was on the stage. But when the light flashed up Baby jumped right out of my arms onto the leading man's head, so that she was there in the picture, and her tail hung over his nose. The name of the picture was 'Loved Ones United,' and he was kneeling at my mother's feet with one arm around me."

"Yes, I saw that photograph in the lobby," said John. "But was n't Baby a loved one too?"

"Not that day, she was n't. You see it was the most important part of the play, where the

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man says, 'Heavens! me own child!' and I answer, 'Father, why did you desert your helpless babe?'"

"I remember," said John, respectfully. "Everybody cried."

"Yes, it's very sad. So the next time we did n't try to have Baby."

When luncheon was over they went back to John's room and looked at his toys, while he asked little Arbutus all about Fritz, and what he liked best to do.

"He does n't need much amusing," she said, "because he has a glad heart. And now he is happy because I don't have to go away."

"Would he like this little printing press?" John asked. And Elsa flushed with pleasure, saying that she thought he would, only John ought not to part with it. But when it came time for Elsa to go, John persuaded her that he did not want the printing press, which was perfectly true, as lately he had not been well enough to use it.

"What beautiful horse is that?" she asked,

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taking a last look out over the park. "See, he is stopping here. Do you know him?"



"THE CHARM THAT LIES IN A FURRY FACE"

"That's my fat Edward," said John, with surprise. "Do you really think he's pretty? He's very dull."

"Oh, is it truly your own horse? He looks

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like a treasure — a picture. You did not tell me you had a horse.”

“He is going to take you home,” said John. “You and Inky. Blinks telephoned for him when you said you were ready to start.”

Elsa turned quite pale with delight.

“I never rode in a nice carriage before,” she said. “Only once, in a hack with lots of other children. What will they all think when I come riding home? They’ll say, ‘Who can this be?’”

She was so excited at the prospect that she could scarcely wait for the elevator, and when she was fairly seated in the carriage, drove off without a single glance at the upper window, where a wistful face watched her out of sight.

“But she had a good time,” John thought, to comfort himself. “And she said good-bye very nicely, upstairs.”

“P-u-r-r !” said Pandora, leaping upon his shoulder. And straightway he forgot everything but the charm that lies in a furry face and whisking tail.

A CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

A CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

THE next morning John was awakened by hearing his father and Winnie talking in the next room.

“Oh, the poor lamb, the poor lamb!” the nurse was saying; and when she came in John asked anxiously, “What’s the matter, Winnie? Is anybody sick?”

“Mr. Homer said I was to tell you, Master John, that you and I and him are to start for Chicago this noon. We shall barely have time for the packing.”

“Chicago!” exclaimed John, as Winnie lifted him up in bed. “Why do we go to Chicago so suddenly? And why was n’t Daddy home last night?”

“He went to see the great Doctor Moritz who has just arrived, and the doctor is going

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straight to Chicago. Faith, I don't know why, when New York's so much more convenient. But he says if you go to Chicago now, he'll do what he can for you."

John turned pale with a great hope.

"Does he think that perhaps he can cure me, Winnie? You know the other doctors said there was no cure."

"Bless your swate heart. I don't know whether he can or not. But it's the hip business that he's in, and he don't use the knife for it either, only his big, kind hands."

"Oh, Winnie, is n't Daddy happy?"

"He's more fashed than I ever saw him, —lots more so than yourself, Master John."

"You have to feel just a little well to get excited," John said, laying his head on Winnie's shoulder; and as she went to bring in his breakfast she wiped her eyes, thinking, "Shure, if the big doctor gentleman can help the poor lamb he's come just in time."

Mr. Homer came home to luncheon looking

A CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

as glad as a boy, and kissed John any number of times while they were waiting for the carriage.

"You mustn't feel too bad, Daddy, if the doctor can't help me," he said softly, then added with a smile, "I'm sure that the trip will do Baby good."

There had been no time to buy Pandora a regular travelling basket, so she was put into the common lunch affair in which she had journeyed back and forth from the theatre. Mr. Homer had been unable to get a stateroom on such short notice, so Pandora was obliged to be content with two sections opposite each other, containing mirrors in which to examine her pink toes, and polished cuspidors to reflect her searching whiskers.

"She'll have to go into the baggage-car to-night," Mr. Homer said, "but I've arranged for her to have every attention, so you don't need to worry."

"Hadn't we better keep her in the basket till the doors are closed, sir?" asked Winnie,

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

anxiously, as the kitten made a dab at a passing shoe-lace.

“Yes, certainly. Get in, Baby;” and Pandora was thrust hastily out of the way, while John amused himself watching the larger passengers.

“Oh, look at that funny old lady!” he said, as a fat figure waddled up the aisle. “Did you ever see so many baskets and bundles?”

The old lady dropped quite a number of the parcels in front of John’s section, and while Mr. Homer was helping her pick them up, the porter looked at her ticket and said: “You’re on de wrong train, ma’am. You’ll have to get out right away. Yas’m.”

“Why, I ain’t sot down yet,” she objected; but as the conductor appeared, she was quickly hustled down the aisle, followed by the porter, who gathered up every basket in sight, and threw them after her just as the train moved out.

This was how it happened that Pandora took an unexpected trip through the air, and received

A CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

a shock of surprise when she landed on the Forty-second Street platform again instead of in Chicago, as she had been led to expect.

“ I ’ve been insulted,” the old lady scolded, as a polite station man drew near. “ I want that porter arrested at once.”

“ What porter, madam ? ”

“ The one on the train that ’s just gone out.”

“ I ’m afraid it would n’t be convenient now,” the man said, smiling. “ What did he do that was wrong ? ”

“ He put me off the train when he saw my ticket ! Is n’t my ticket as good as any other folks’ ? ”

“ Let me see it,” said the man. “ Oh, yes; but you ’re bound for Maine, and that train goes to Chicago. Would you rather have gone to Chicago ? ”

“ My sakes, no ! I don’t look fit, in this bonnet ! ”

“ Then why are you so angry with the porter ? ”

“ ’T was n’t so much what he done as the way

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

he done it. My lunch-basket is all shook up inside. Just look here ;” and the cover being off, out popped Pandora’s head with a talkative little “E-ow?”

“My land!” exclaimed the old lady, in dismay.

“Great guns!” said the equally astonished agent. “Do they eat cats where you come from?”

“I never set eyes on it before. That black fool shied it after me as the train started. He must have took the wrong basket, and those other folks are eating my sandwiches.”

“What are you going to do with it?”

“Let it loose, I guess. I’m one of the few old maids that hates ’em. There *is* some left, and they’re an honor to their class. Scat, you little nuisance!”

“Give it to me,” said the agent. “There may be some inquiries at the other end.” And having taken the old lady to her train, he carried Pandora to the parcel-room and checked her, which would have been an excellent scheme

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if he had not happened to lose the check on his way home to supper.

"What's this?" asked a newsboy, pouncing on something that shone at his feet. "It's got a number on it. Oh, this world is full of blasted hopes! I thought 't was a dollar, sure."

"Lemme look," said another one. "Oh, dis ain't so bad. We'll take it to the station and see what we draw, see? Maybe a bag of toilet instruments, or a pile of rugs."

"Both 'll be useful," said Pell, the first boy, "in case we ever adopt a kid."

They presented the check at the parcel window, and as ill luck would have it, the man who had received Pandora was off duty, so she was handed out without question by the sleepy attendant.

"Ten cents, please," he added, and having exchanged a quick look of concern, each boy fished a nickel from his pocket, Pell holding up two fingers to imply that whatever was in this deal should be divided equally between them.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

They ran with the basket to a secluded spot and eagerly looked inside.

“ E-ow ! ” said Pandora, indignantly this time, for she was tired of seeing a new face whenever the cover was lifted.

“ Great bamboo trees ! it’s a cat ! ” cried Pell, his hands dropping to his side. “ We’ve been done.”

“ To the extent of a dime,” said the other, mournfully. “ Let’s take it to the station and get our money back.”

“ Yes, and have the cops after us.”

“ What’ll we do with it? Chasin’ ’em is too tame.”

“ Let’s send it to Coppy Flynn.”

“ What ! him that’s so scared of cats ? ”

“ Yes, as a token of affection from us that’s so scared of him.”

“ How’ll you get it to him ? ”

“ Leave that to me,” said Pell, tearing the margin from one of his papers, and writing something. “ Got a string ? ”

Half an hour later, when policeman Flynn

A CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

walked past, there was no one in sight but a very festive gentleman who steered carefully in his direction.

“What you want now?” asked Flynn, impolitely. “You go home to bed. See?”

“Funny noise inside the parcel-post box,” said the stranger, in no wise offended. “Buzz — scratch — ftz! — like that. See?”

“Dynamite bomb!” thought the policeman in alarm, hurrying to the box, from which certainly issued unusual sounds.

“Better stand back,” he said to the man. “It may burst.”

“Glad to accommodate,” replied the other. “In case you explode — pick you up. No trouble, I assure you.”

“E-ow!” wailed Pandora, anxiously, quite worn out with trying to climb up the steep sides of the prison into which the boys had thrust her.

“Faith, it’s fools we’ve both been,” said the policeman, giving a sigh of relief, “though it’s a bomb I’d rather be handlin’ than one of thim scratchin’, curdlin’ cats.”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Permit me to remove the machine,” said the stranger, putting his arm down into the box, and after some groping he managed to seize Pandora by the ear. Of course it hurt, but as the rest of her came along behind, she was soon outside, and held up to the light by the happy gentleman, who seemed even more happy than before.

“Awful dangerous machine,” he said, examining the paper that was tied to her neck. “It’s called Coppy Flynn. Name of manufacturer, or name of machine?”

“You move on quick or I’ll machine you,” said the irate policeman, and the man let Pandora leap gently to the ground, after whispering in her ear, “Beg pardon, I’m sure, but I have an engagement.”

“Don’t you give me no back talk,” called Flynn, swelling with rage. And the queer gentleman wandered happily off, murmuring to himself, “Now I wonder *which* cruel person mailed that unfortunate cat.”

Pandora tried to make friends with Mr.

A CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

Flynn, but a badly aimed kick caused her to change her mind, and dodge past him down the subway entrance where a train was coming in.

“Another policeman, with a louder voice and bigger eyes!” she thought in terror, and hid under the platform until the creature rumbled out of sight. But just as she was preparing to come out again, another one dashed past, and gave a shriek of rage as if it said, “I see you hiding in the dark, Pandora, so it’s no use for you to bristle up your tail. My tail is longer than yours, and you can’t frighten *me*.”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE SUBWAY CAT

FOR many weeks Pandora lived under the platform in the subway, and was fed from the dinner-pails of the station employés, and men who worked around the tracks. At first they had tried to chase her away, but her experiences in the street were so much worse than those underground that she always returned to her first hiding-place. At least, no boys or dogs lived there, and she soon found that the shrieking policemen never moved from their tracks to kick her. But the rush and roar of their footsteps hurt her ears, and one day, when two of them ran into each other and called names amid a great hissing of steam, she was so frightened that she ran upstairs and left the subway for good.

“Oh, I wish I could find Henry or John or any of the people who loved me,” she

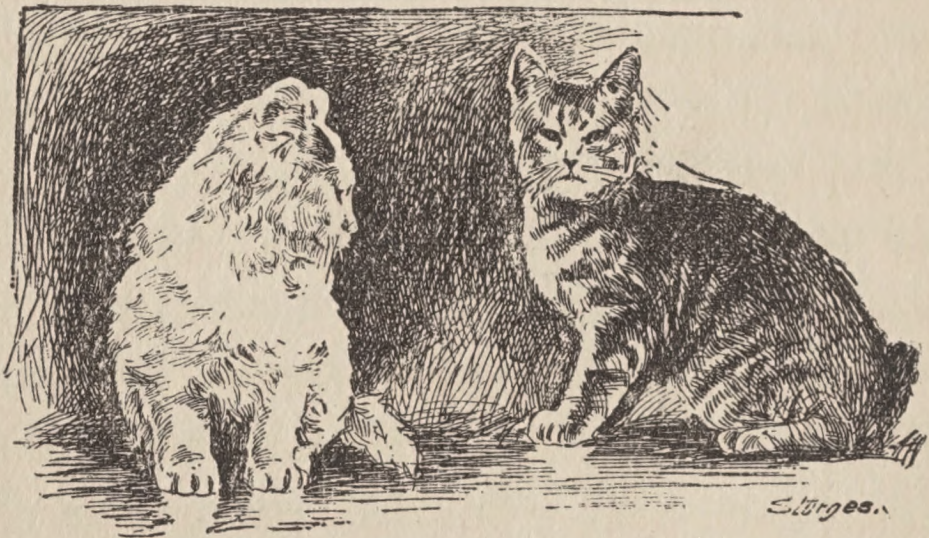
THE SUBWAY CAT

thought, as a wagon nearly ran her down. "Here comes another dog. Oh, I want to be somebody's cat!"

But nobody at any of the stores where she called seemed to be in need of a cat. The vacancies were all filled—except that in her poor little inside; and before long Pandora learned the woe of an empty stomach, as well as the sorrow of an empty heart. Her fur became weedy and unkempt. Her white guimpe turned black, and her maltese petticoat rusty with wear. So of course she grew less attractive every day, and stood less chance of being adopted on account of her looks. In addition to this, she was growing so fast that she had no longer the charm of babyhood to melt peoples' hearts, and cause them to open their milk-cans. "Oh, look at that old ash-barrel cat!" they would say, and throw whatever happened to be lying near. Whether this hit or not depended upon whether they were good shots, as Pandora had never learned to dodge.

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Little by little she drifted over to the East side and made friends with cats that Annabel would never have approved of. But if one is affectionate, one must have sympathy or die, and ash-barrel sympathy is quite as genuine



“SHE MADE FRIENDS THAT ANNABEL WOULD NEVER
HAVE APPROVED OF”

as the Persian kind. So Pandora learned how to steal and fight and sing bad cat songs under open windows. But she was never happy in this new life, because at heart she was a lady.

When spring came she joined a company of half-starved cats, who had been deserted by

THE SUBWAY CAT

their owners on leaving town, and formed a hunting club for the purpose of catching the squirrels in Central Park. Of course this was a pity, but the cats were too desperate with hunger to heed the City law, and many a bushy tail paid for the carelessness of young people now dancing at summer hotels. Most of the cats that Pandora met had belonged, like herself, to refined people, and some of them had lived in beautiful Fifth Avenue homes.

"They say we can catch mice," said a mournful little lady who still wore the remains of a sky-blue bow, "but there are no mice in the streets of New York, and the houses are locked against us."

One evening Pandora was strolling around the Park sniffing at the peanut-shells under the benches, and hoping to find a beefsteak among them, when a large tabby tom-cat walked past. He was a sleek, well-fed citizen of the tradesman class, and did not seem to be out in search of squirrels.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Good evening,” he said pleasantly, as Pandora started to run.

“Please, sir, give me a mouse,” she whined in the begging tone that the East-side cats had taught her.

“Well, I’m sorry, but I’m out of mice to-day,” the cat said with regret, “but if you’ll just step around the corner with me you can have some meat, and welcome. My father keeps a butcher’s shop—the best on Columbus Avenue.”

Pandora’s mind struggled back to the days of her happy kittenhood, and she seemed to remember having met this cat before.

“Are n’t you Emma?” she asked suddenly, “the cat who cured his master of rheumatism?”

“The same,” Emma replied with a flourish of the tail. “Are n’t you the kitten who came in a bag to have her picture taken with me, and then went off before I had a chance to look pleasant?”

“I am,” said Pandora, hungrily. “I can

THE SUBWAY CAT

smell that meat yet. Oh, how long ago it seems !”

“ Here is Eighth Avenue,” said Emma, as they reached the street. “ Wait till I call, then crouch and run.”

They did so, and as Emma led Pandora down the wide street she noticed that many cats greeted him from the gloom of doorways, and always with much respect.

“ How many friends you seem to have !” she said.

“ Yes, little lady. It’s not my way to boast, I hope, but I fancy I’m pretty well known. One of our customers,” he added, as a much beribboned Persian gave him a haughty little nod from an upper window.

At the corner of Columbus Avenue they passed an Italian fruit-stand, where five dirty cats slumbered happily in a basket of cherries.

“ They all look full,” Pandora said. “ What luck some people have !”

“ Oh, I would n’t notice any such as them,”

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said Emma, disapprovingly. "They're not quite our style."

"Ours?" repeated Pandora, timidly.

"Yours and mine," said the cat, in triumph. "I'm going to take you home with me. You shall be a butcher's cat."

Pandora's eyes grew moist with gratitude, but she was so tired that before they reached the shop her legs gave way, and she sank down, unable to take another step.

"Oh, do make an effort," the anxious Emma implored. "There are pieces of chuck steak and tripe under the counter, a great many pieces, and all shall be yours. I won't even smell of 'em."

But Pandora was too feeble to stir.

"Dead cat!" yelped a little cur, making a dash at her. But Emma dealt him a blow on the nose that sent him howling away.

"This is not a safe place," said Emma, and managed to drag Pandora into the shadow of a step, where she lay with closed eyes.

A queer-looking red cart rattled down the

THE SUBWAY CAT

street, followed by a man who kept peering into doorways, and under dark areas.

“That cart is from the pound,” whispered Emma, excitedly. “Lie still. They must n’t see us.”

“What?” asked Pandora, feebly; and the searching man stopped to listen. “More strays here,” he said, and walked straight to the spot where the sick cat lay.

“Run! save yourself!” she gasped to Emma. But the brave creature refused to leave her, and both cats were thrust into the basket that was tossed from the cart.

“Oh, where are they taking us!” wailed Pandora, as the cart started, and from above and below them came the moans of other frightened captives.

“We are going to the pound,” said Emma, “but don’t let that disturb you, for father won’t let us stay there long. He can’t get on without me.”

As the cart drove up outside the pound, Pandora’s ears were deafened by such a medley

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of barks and howls as she had never heard before.

“Are they being whipped?” she whispered to Emma.

“No, I think not. It is only fright, and sorrow because their friends have forgotten them.”

The cats were separated in the pound, but much to Pandora’s relief, Emma’s cage was the one directly over her own.

“Are you all right?” he asked, peering through a knothole in his floor.

“Yes, are you?” she replied.

“No, I’m beginning to be bored. This joke has gone too far.”

Presently a man brought them something to eat, and as Emma was not hungry, he managed to poke his portion down through the knothole to Pandora, who soon revived under the tonic of a double repast.

“The table’s not bad, is it?” she said, but Emma sniffed and declined to answer, so Pandora judged that he was regretting the pile

THE SUBWAY CAT

of tripe and chuck steak under his father's counter.

That night the noises in the pound increased, and Pandora was unable to get any sleep. But in the morning there was a good breakfast, and kind treatment from the man in charge. "If I could only get a nap," she sighed, as the homeless cats and ownerless dogs wailed on unceasingly through the day.

But the next morning there was a rumble of wheels, and a larger cage was pushed past them, into which were put most of the wailing cats and dogs. A door was slammed, and that night there was quiet once more at the pound.

"Where did they all go?" Pandora asked her friend. "Did their families come for them at last?"

"I don't know," said Emma, whose blood was beginning to turn cold.

"Do you think they'll come back to-night? It's so nice and quiet when they're away."

"I don't think they'll come back," said Emma, in a frightened voice.

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The next day there was a great excitement outside, and the butcher rushed in, crying, "Where is my cat, my Emma, who cured me of rheumatism? Give up my Emma, you scoundrels, or I have you all arrested! I have search the city over, and he is not there."

"Please give a description of your cat," said one of the men, kindly.

"A description of him? He is the best, the noblest, faithfulest animal alive. The truest — kindest —"

"What color is he, please?"

"As good a color as there is. No better anywhere."

"Perhaps you'd better come and look yourself." But by this time Emma was uttering loud howls of joy, and in a second he and the butcher were in each other's arms.

"Oh, father! it's been fierce," he mewed.

"How dared you steal my cat, you scamps?" the butcher raged, and carried Emma off before he had a chance to put in a plea for his unhappy companion.

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“Emma ! Em-ma !” called Pandora in despair. But Emma was already on a street car bound for home. He tried in vain to explain about Pandora, but the butcher only said, “See how he loves me ! and is so glad to get back again !” And that was all that Emma could ever make him understand.

So Pandora grieved alone at the pound, and each day had the agony of seeing other pets claimed by loving relatives, while she was left behind.

Sometimes a lady would come who had not lost a cat, but wanted one ; and then Pandora would purr her prettiest, and try to put up her fluffy tail. But the tail had lost so much hair in her life on the East side, that a mere glimpse of it was enough to deprive her of any chance.

“Not that old thing ! Show me something pretty !” they would say, and Pandora would lie down again with an aching heart, her purr dying away in despair.

But at last a day came when the wagon that

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took little sufferers to the gas-chamber stopped outside her cage.

“That must have been a pretty cat once,” said one of the men. “Pity nobody wanted it.”

“Oh, what are you going to do with me?” Pandora wept. And all her companions in the wagon wept also, filled with a vague terror that they could not understand. The wagon was pushed along to the gas chamber, the door thrown open, and then —

“Stop — stop!” cried a boy’s voice. “There’s just a chance she’s in there.” And Pandora gave a cry of joy as the boy ran into the room.

He looked anxiously at the wagon, then gave a great shout of delight and said, “I see her! I see her! That’s our cat. I know her pretty face, and the scar on her nose where the rat bit her. Take her out quick, please.” And too weak with happiness to believe that it was really true, the broken-hearted little wanderer was placed in Gideon’s arms.

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Not ashamed of the tears that fell on her ragged coat, he hurried her away from that place of sorrow, saying:

“Oh, Pandora! Pandora! a minute more and I should have been too late!”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE REST OF IT

(Told by Pandora)

I DID not care where Gideon took me so long as he kept petting me and calling me his poor pretty kitten. It was so many months since any one had called me pretty that I had almost forgotten the sound of the word, and it is very sweet for a cat to realize that she is always a kitten in the eyes of her friends.

"You can't go to Annabel yet," whispered Gideon, with sympathy, "'cause she's out of town. But you can stay with me till she gets back. Aunt Pen could n't refuse to keep you now, when you're feeling so bad."

But that is exactly what Aunt Pen did. She sent Gideon on an errand, and when he was gone she thrust me out into the hall, saying, "This is no hospital for tramps."

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I sat down to wait for the elevator, hoping that the boy would recognize me, but when the door opened he called out "Scat!" in such an unfeeling way that I fled. And to crown it all Bachelor walked past without speaking to me. "Bachelor!" I said in pleading tones. But he only glanced at me coldly, said "I have not the honor," and passed on.

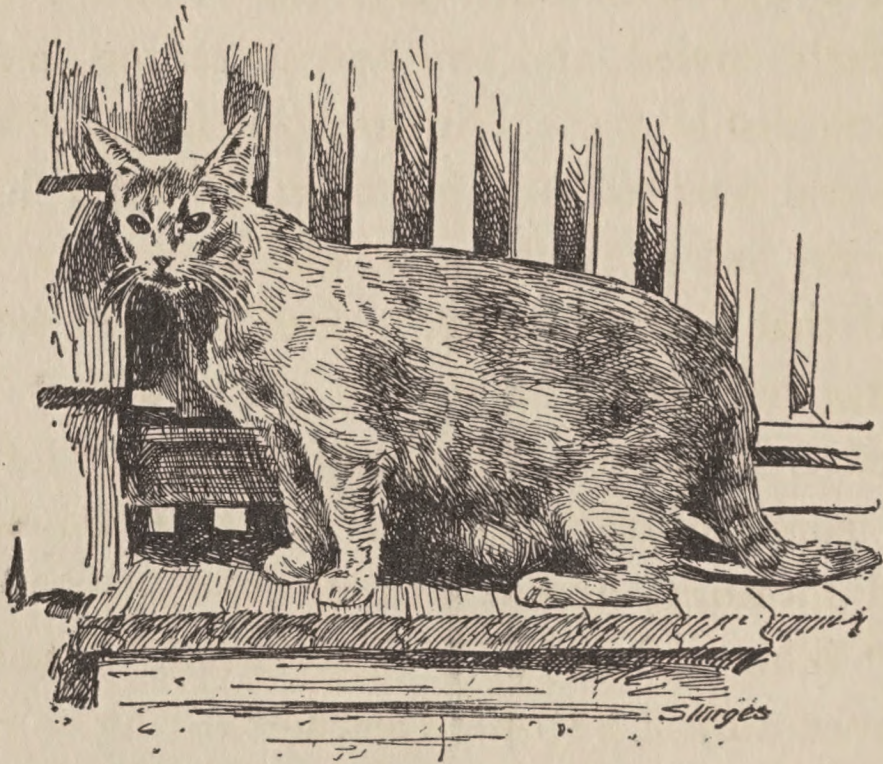
I tried to console myself with the knowledge that he was half blind, but nevertheless it is terrible to be cut by an old friend, only because the hair has passed from one's tail. And he was not in a position to make such points, either, as my tail, though a poor thing, was at least my own.

I went on, up to the roof, not daring to risk the street, and hoping that I might not run across Miss Harry, for it seemed as if, in my sad state, I could not bear to meet her critical eyes. But this shows how little you can tell about people, or cats either, until you lose the hair from your tail.

Miss Harry came running to meet me with a cry of love and joy.

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

“Oh, you poor li'l thing!” she said, just as when I cut my paw so long ago. “You come right home with me this minute, and stay



“MISS HARRY, OF CHARLESTON”

till Annabel gets back. Constantia will be delighted.”

And this dear cat not only took me home with her, but gave me her own supper and her own bed, while she herself lay on the floor, saying that she really preferred it.

THE REST OF IT

You can imagine how this made me feel, for although I was conscious of being cleverer than Miss Harry, she had a charm of manner, and a way with other cats that I had always secretly envied, and this had sometimes caused me to dislike her. But to-night I was to learn the real tenderness of her heart. When I told her my sad story she wept with sympathy, and said that Constantia had something that would bring hair back to a tail. Miss Harry had needed it herself once, on account of sitting on some fly-paper. You rubbed it on night and morning, and it was fine.

"What makes you so nice to me?" I asked, moved almost beyond speech.

"Why, this is nothing!" Miss Harry said in surprise. "It's the way we all do in Charleston." And you can imagine what my loneliness had been when I tell you that I was actually glad to hear about Charleston again!

Presently Constantia and her family came in to welcome me, and after that Miss Harry

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told me a piece of news that at the time was a crushing blow.

"I suppose you have n't heard that Annabel is going to be married," she said, "to a Mr. West. She is visiting his mother now."

I jumped out of the basket, lame and tired as I was, and cried, "I shall never give my consent."

"I'm afraid you're too late," Miss Harry replied. "You ought to have stayed home to attend to it. My people say he's quite the gentleman."

"He is not," I said angrily. "He sat on me in a hansom cab and committed other outrages too numerous to mention."

Just then the door-bell rang and we heard Gideon's voice asking if any one had seen Pandora Van Camp.

"Yes, she's visiting Miss Harry," Constantia said. "Miss Harry invited her, and we-all are going to keep her till Annabel comes back. Poor cat! she looks so sad and changed."

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“She’s been at the pound,” Gideon said wrathfully. “Who wouldn’t look sad and changed, and deaf besides? But I’m awfully glad you’re going to keep her, because Aunt Pen —” Here his feelings grew too much for him, and we heard him bound off down the steps, muttering “Aunt Pen!” under his breath.

I found out afterwards how it was that Gideon happened to be at the pound in time to save my life. It seemed that when I was first lost Annabel had left a pile of post cards with the man there, so that he could let her know whenever a maltese and white kitten was brought in; and every week or two, one of these cards came. But it was never Pandora that she found, and the visits made her feel so badly that Gideon offered to go in her place. The last post card had been delayed through forwarding, or I should have been freed before, and spared much agony of mind.

In a few days Annabel came home, and welcomed me so tenderly that I almost forgave

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her for wanting to marry Mr. West. Then, too, he had adopted a habit of carrying catnip in his pocket, which soon convinced me that after all, he had his good points. But I felt so badly at the thought of leaving Harold alone in the flat that I could scarcely let him out of my sight, and showed my affection by jumping on his bed at night to lap the end of his nose. Strange to say he always seemed annoyed at first, but cooled down when he found who it was. I don't dare to think what might have happened if it had been any one else who did it.

But my mind was soon relieved by Gideon's aunt, who fell down the steps one day and broke her hip. You will wonder how this could be a relief to any one but Gideon. Yet when he came to tell us about it, I felt sure that this ill wind would blow somebody good.

"She's going to live with her cousin in the country," he said very quietly, "and I'm to be sent to—a Home!"

"To a Home!" echoed Annabel, in dismay,

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for even a cross aunt is better than none. "O Gideon! you mustn't go to a Home!"

But Gideon did not seem to mind. He was pale and dry-eyed as he explained that his aunt had said she would not be able to keep him any longer. She was now helpless herself, so how could she provide for a child?

"Cheer up, old man," said Harold, putting an arm around him. "I'll go down and see what's doing."

And when he was gone Annabel took Gideon on her lap. I jumped up too, and licked away the tears that came when Harold was out of sight—for Gideon had been ashamed to cry before a man—and tried to tell him that I understood how he felt about going to a Home, as I had just come from the pound.

Presently Harold returned, and beckoned Annabel into the next room, and they talked for quite a while. Then I heard Harold say, "Well, it's no more than fair anyhow, when you're deserting me for another man. If any

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poor fellow ever needed a brother I think I'm the one."

They came back, and calling Gideon to him, Harold put a finger under the boy's chin and said, "Well, old chap, how would you like to stay here with me and be my brother, since another man's taking away my sister? Do you think we could make Elga give us enough to eat?"

Gideon looked at him a minute without speaking, and then in a strange little voice said, "Oh, Mr. Harold, is it—oh, it is n't a joke?"

"No, old man, if you think you'd like to do it. I'll prepare you for college, and, by Jove! we'll go to the circus too."

Gideon broke down in earnest then, and wiped his eyes on a very grimy handkerchief that had just been used to make a bow for my tail.

"You ought n't to spend—so much money," he said between sobs. "I ain't your boy."

"Now that's just where you're mistaken,"

THE REST OF IT

Harold said; "for when I was downstairs I signed a paper that makes you my boy always. But you must remember that I'm yours too, and that boys have to be amused."

This made Gideon laugh, and then we all purred together; at least, I purred my very loudest, and the rest did the best they could.

"You see, I found the boy came from a good family," Harold told some one the next day. "His father was a minister, and when he and his wife died Gideon was adopted by this Mrs. Moles' husband, whom his wife alluded to affectionately as a 'soft-hearted old fool.' I'm not afraid but that the boy will do me credit, and be much cheaper to keep than a polo pony."

So Gideon's little trunk was brought down to our flat, and he slept with Harold until Anabel went away.

But the greatest surprise came on the day of the wedding. We were all looking at her trousseau while she packed, when the door

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

opened and in ran a little boy with a great shout of joy. You will scarcely believe me when I tell you that this boy who came running in just like other children, was my own little John! The great doctor had healed him!

"Hurrah, old man! Home just in time!" called Harold, tossing him up in his arms, while Gideon danced around in delight.

"I have a present for you, Annabel," said John, laughing. "It's one of those silly things to wear round your neck that girls like. Papa got it at Tiffany's. Harold, do let me kick you once to show how strong my legs are."

"Ouch!" said the Professor, rubbing his knee. "I think you can truthfully say, John, that you are rapidly improving."

By this time I could no longer conceal my joy at seeing John again, and as I trotted up to him he sprang forward eagerly, crying: "Oh, it's Baby! it's Baby! Annabel, where, where did you find my Baby-cat?"

THE REST OF IT

"That is n't your kitty, dear," Annabel said gently. "That is our Pandora, who was lost and went to the pound."

"No, but it is my Baby, who got thrown off the train by mistake, with an old lady, and was never heard from again. Papa telegraphed every week. Oh, Baby! how you have grown!"

"There seems to be a case of mistaken identity around here somewhere," said the Professor, with a twinkle in his eye. "How do you propose to settle it, sister?"

"I don't know," answered Annabel, in distress. "That certainly is Pandora. I recognize the scar on her nose."

"My kitty had a scar too," said John, patting me confidently. "She must have looked something like yours."

"What are we going to do?" asked Gideon. "I can swear that's Pandora Van Camp."

"So could I," I purred to John, but I was unable to explain that I was also Baby Homer, ex-member of the "Snowed-in" Theatrical

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

Company, and graduate of the New York Hook-and-Ladder force.

"It's a pity you were out of town when Pandora gave her party," Annabel said, "because then you would have known who she was."

"We'll have to let Pandora decide for herself," said Harold, putting me on the floor. "Now let's all call her, and see which she goes to."

Annabel called first, and although I had not forgotten her weeks of devoted petting, and the catnip that Mr. West had given me, I did not stir. Then Harold called, and my heart ached at refusing him, for no one else has ever shown me more courtesy, or invented more charming ways in which to play with one's tail. And when Gideon called, my eyes filled with grateful tears, in memory of the pound. But when little John called me I did not stop to reason at all. I ran straight into his arms.

"Well, if you aren't the most fickle, faithless cat alive!" said Annabel, in disgust.

THE REST OF IT

“Oh, Pandora! breeder of discord! thou art rightly named,” said Harold. And even Gideon looked hurt.

But I could not explain to them that it was not fickleness on my part. We always love best the people who need us most, and I knew that little John needed me. Although he could now run and walk, he would not be strong for some time yet, and as Harold had Gideon, and Annabel Mr. West, I felt that little John ought to have me!

“Well, I don’t see but that we’ll have to bid Pandora farewell, Gideon,” said Harold, with a funny smile. “She and Annabel have both chosen another fellow, so you and Hominy and I will keep bachelor’s hall together.”

.

My story ends, as it began, with two round balls of fur lying out in the sunshine. Only this time the larger ball is myself, and the little one my son Virgil, two months old. We are spending the summer at the Homers’ country place, and I have found that the fairy stories

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

my mother used to tell me are true. I have lived to see flowers growing out of the ground.

Candy, the fire horse, is here too, and spends peaceful days in a juicy pasture with a few



“MY SON, VIRGIL, TWO MONTHS OLD”

congenial friends. But when the church bell rings he snorts and canters to the fence, hoping always that it may mean another summons to a fire. Virgil has learned to ride on his back just as I did on Abraham's, and Candy is a

THE REST OF IT

devoted nurse. John rides him too, and little Arbutus and her brother Fritz, when they come out on a visit.

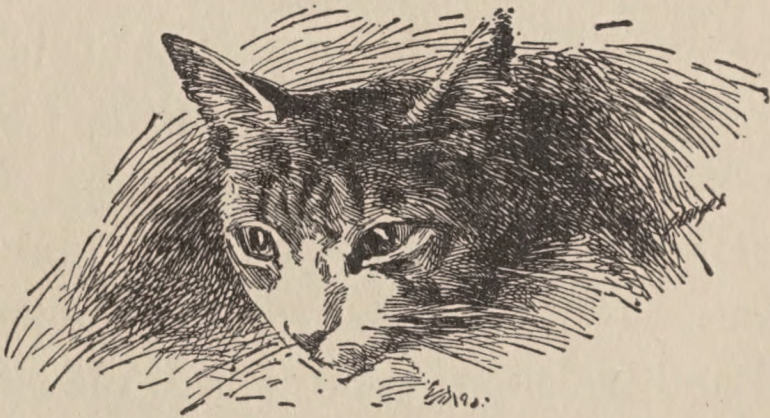
Harold and Gideon are away somewhere on a fishing trip, and Hominy is boarding with Weasels until they get back. Hominy has a new maltese wife named Wheatena, that Harold bought for him down on Eighth Avenue; and Gideon says that she nags him awfully. But from what I know of Hominy, a little discipline won't do him any harm.

A few days ago I heard that Annabel has another cat, presented to her by Eunice Wood of Montrose. His name is Admiral Togo Wood West, and he is a son of the pink-toed Weejums. Virgil, of course, is promised to Harold and Gideon as soon as he is old enough to leave home.

He is now chewing my ears in the most distracting way — every mother knows how hard it is to write with a child around and saying: “Oh, mother! won't you please switch your tail a little while? Please, mother!”

THE FLIGHT OF PUSS PANDORA

So I am sure you will excuse me if I leave you and amuse him a few minutes, for he is the sweetest, fluffiest, cunningest boy alive. But the name of Virgil, that Harold gave him, is not really his own. The name that I call him by, and that he answers to most readily, is Emma.



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